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November 2001

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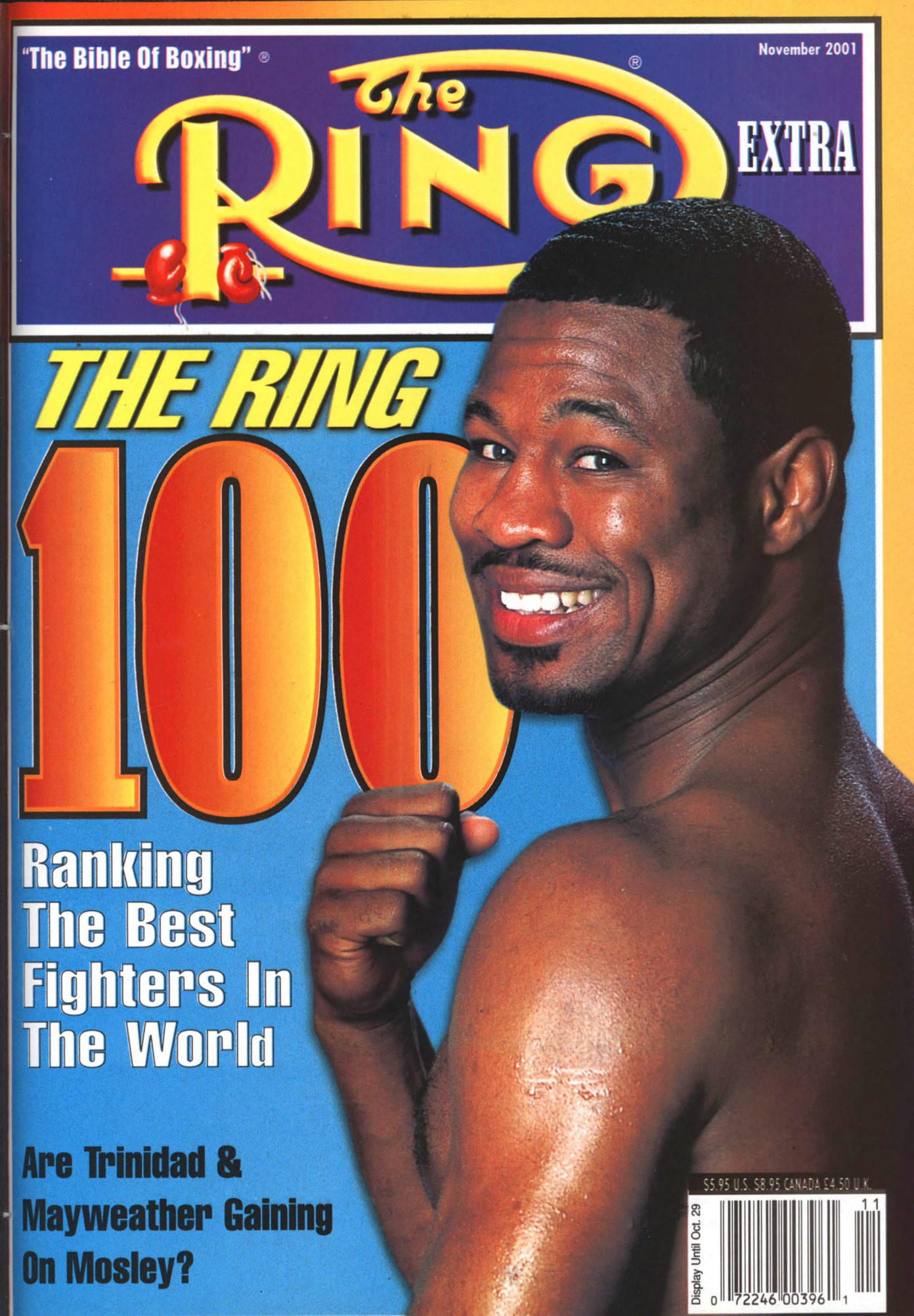

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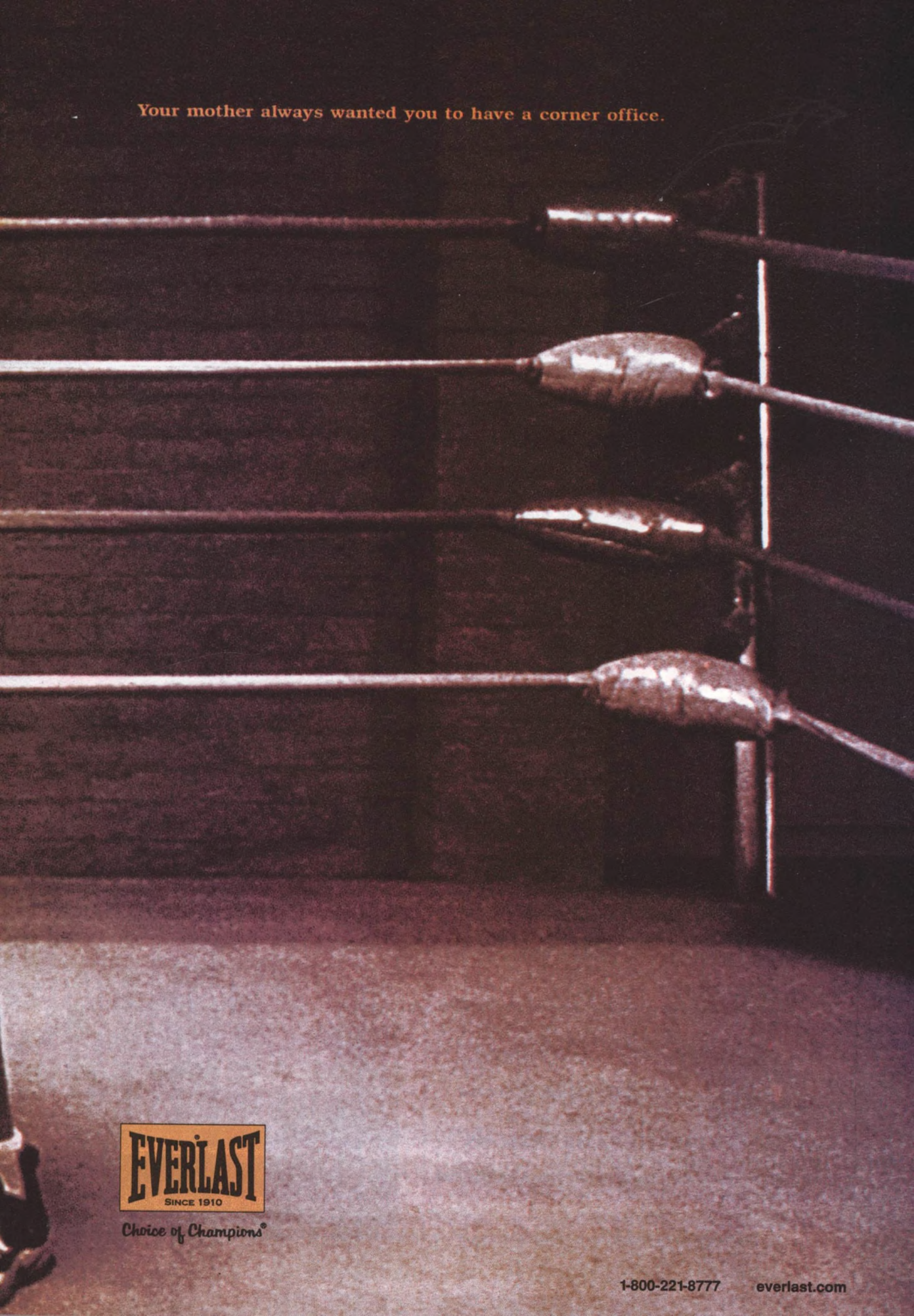
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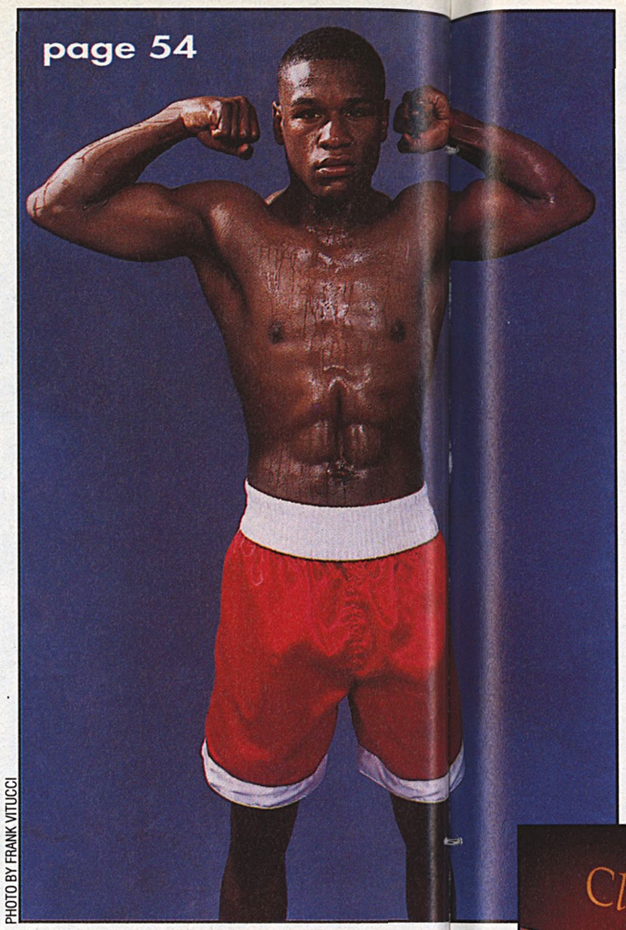

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RINGSIDE

Every time a boxer dies of injuries suffered in the ring, I'm forced to ask myself some very painful questions about the sport I both love and depend on for my daily bread. The recent death of light heavyweight Beethavean Scottland was no exception.

When I first started covering boxing in the 1970s, there were serious health and safety issues that were often the cause of ring fatalities. The medical examinations were nowhere near as comprehensive as they are now, and it was fairly easy for an unfit fighter to slip through the screening process. There was no Association of Boxing Commissioners back then, and the lack of communication between commissions frequently resulted in boxers who were on medical suspension in one state fighting in another. Fight Fax Inc. (formerly *Computer Boxing Update*) didn't get started until the mid-'80s, so there was no central gathering place for records, which made it much easier to falsify records and created potentially perilous mismatches.

Over the years, tremendous headway has been made in these areas, perhaps the most significant of which was the signing into law of the Professional Boxing Safety Act in '96. Yet despite all the improvements, fighters still die, and will continue to do so as long as boxing exists. We should continue to strive for greater safety, but we also have to acknowledge a couple of hard truths: The inherent danger that makes boxing so special is the same thing that kills its participants. If it were possible to totally eliminate that danger, boxing itself would die.

***

The Sweet Science is always better off when we keep the judges and lawyers out of it, and the recent court case involving heavyweight champion Hasim Rahman only serves to emphasize the point. It was basically a two-part case. First, Lennox Lewis sued to enforce a return bout clause that was in the contract for the first Rahman fight. Second, Cedric Kushner, Rahman's promoter at the time of the Lewis fight, sued to try a keep the new champ under contract.

After hearing testimony from both sides, U.S. District Judge Miriam Goldman Cedarbaum handed down a split decision: Rahman would have to fight Lewis next or sit idle for 18 months, but he could fight for his new promoter, Don King, because his contract with Kushner had lapsed.

The first part of Cedarbaum's ruling appears to disregard the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act that restricts, among other things, "coercive" rematches. And anybody who thinks Rahman would have gotten a shot at Lewis had he refused to sign a rematch clause knows about as much about how boxing is run as Cedarbaum. What a joke! The only court that should force one fighter to face another is the court of public opinion. And I thought all the wacky judges were working fights in Las Vegas.

The second half of the ruling has not been subject to the same criticism, but that hasn't stopped a lot of media members from denouncing Rahman for being disloyal to Kushner. I've heard conflicting stories about what went down between the fighter and the promoter, and will refrain from passing judgment. But that doesn't stop me from wondering if the backlash has more to do with some media members' dislike of King than anything Rahman did.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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Assistant Vice President

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Robert Nucci
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ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Vincent Bellissima
(215) 643-6385

ADVERTISING ASSISTANT
Dianne Weber

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
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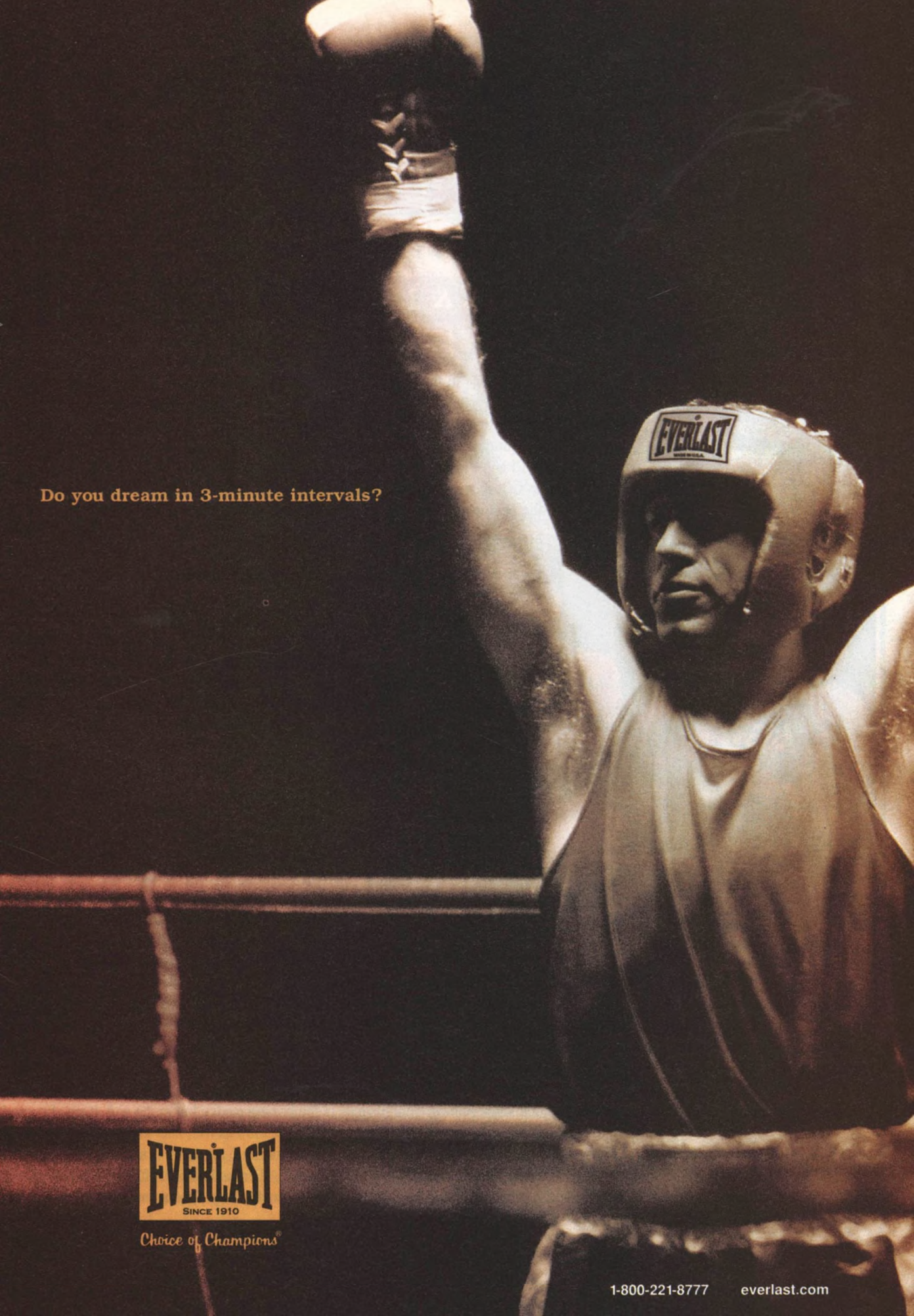
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ROUND ONE

LAILA & JACQUI WERE NO JOKE

Laila Ali and Jacqui Frazier-Lyde were putting on the Dan Quayle of boxing promotions, a nationwide joke that some in the media took the liberty of laughing out loud about. It was an easy target, considering it involved two inexperienced women cashing in on the names of their famous fathers, Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier, and expecting people to buy it on pay-per-view for $24.95.

However, something funny happened at the Turning Stone Casino in Verona, New York, on the night of June 8. Ali and Frazier-Lyde actually put on a spirited performance that drew an estimated 100,000 PPV buys, despite going up against Game Two of the NBA Finals and a world title fight on ESPN2. From the opening bell, Frazier-Lyde and Ali went at each other with the venom of a barroom brawl. Ali, 23, won the eight-round bout by scores of 77-75, 79-73, and 76-76, and both fighters won a measure of respect for the effort and ferocity they displayed.

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Frazier-Lyde and Ali put on high drama

Lucia Rijker, generally perceived as the best female boxer in the world, admitted that she struggled with the fact that fighters like herself and Christy Martin, who had paid their dues, never received even a smidgen of the attention Ali and Frazier-Lyde drew. But once the fight started, that frustration quickly left.

"Going in, I had a lot of concerns about that fight," Rijker said. "My concern was how it would reflect on women's boxing. But it was more exciting than I expected it to be. What I think it did was create an opportunity for women's boxing to be taken to another level.

"With their experience, plus the pressure of everyone thinking it was a joke, I give them all the credit for handling that. Most people over here in Holland (where Rijker lives) were very skeptical. But this is the world of entertainment. I thought they did a great job in front of the world press. For me, that was like a dream, because that's something I've always wanted, being on that world stage. Both those girls fought their hearts out."

One journalist who certainly felt vindicated was *Philadelphia Daily News* boxing writer and RING contributor Bernard Fernandez. It was Fernandez who indirectly started the "Ali-Frazier IV" ball rolling when he called Frazier-Lyde, a 39-year-old mother of three and an attorney, to get her reaction about Laila Ali fighting. Frazier-Lyde spouted that she would kick Laila's butt, then followed through by training and, after seven fights, getting into the ring with Laila.

Fernandez took some ribbing from his pals in the boxing media, but in the end, it was Fernandez, like Ali and Frazier-Lyde, who laughed last.

"Sure, some people were turning their noses up about the fight, but I would say Laila and Jacqui probably took a step toward some degree of legitimacy," Fernandez said. "It was trendy to dump on it, and I'll admit it was not high art, but certainly reasonably high drama, and certainly much better than people expected."

—Joe Santoliquito

CAN S.R.L. BOXING DRAW S.R.O. CROWDS?

One of the few times Sugar Ray Leonard entered the ring as an underdog was the night he fought Marvin Hagler, but if he, along with partner Bjorn Rebney, can make a longterm success of their most recent business venture, it will be an even bigger upset than when Leonard defeated Hagler. Leonard is trying to do what no other former world champion has ever done—become a successful promoter.

"The reason I decided to go into promoting was because I've always felt that the participants were always there on the front lines fighting, but never in the office or the control center," explained Leonard. "I've always wanted to have a company that would generate excitement, build fighters, market them, and promote them the way it was done back in 1970s and '80s when I was coming up."

Of course, being Sugar Ray Leonard has its advantages, and the five-division former titlist has already secured 12 dates on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, starting with the August 3 program. But that hasn't prevented skepticism within the boxing industry, especially among those who recall that the boxers Leonard handled in the past never achieved much under his management.

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

The promotional duo of Rebney and Leonard

"There is a major misconception that I'm not going to be hands on," said Leonard. "That may have been the case when I had a management company years ago, but back then I was still ambiguous about whether or not I still wanted to fight. So I wasn't really into office duties and what have you. Mike Trainer was doing those things. With my partner, Bjorn, I've built this new company from Day One. I've attended all the meetings, helped secure the television deal, the sponsors, all these things. I've been travelling, meeting people, meeting fighters. It hasn't been easy, but it's what I want."

One area where Leonard and Rebney think they can do a better job than most promoters is in bringing out the fighters' personalities.

"We want to promote the fighters, not just the fights," said Leonard. "I remember back in the day, people knew of these guys. That doesn't exist anymore. I want the fans to have a vested interest in each guy. I want the fans to know who they are, where they're from, and why they compete. I want the fans to care about the fighters as people, because I believe a caring fan is the best kind of fan."

What fans of all stripes want, of course, is good fights, and to that end, Leonard and Rebney have hired veterans Ron Katz and J.D. Brown as matchmakers.

"It's a collaboration, but I will have the final say," Leonard told THE RING. "I want to give fans what they want—fights that could go either way."

Leonard also sounds more than willing to do his share of hard work in order to hype the fights SRL Boxing will promote.

"I'll be at the site five days to a week before the fight, promoting, getting people excited," he said.

In an effort to give back to the community, SRL Boxing has also formed a charitable alliance with the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation. According to a press release, "SRL Boxing will design and execute programs to increase awareness of this deadly disease, as well as provide donations and implement fundraising efforts surrounding SRL Boxing events."

Leonard certainly couldn't have picked a better partner to help him achieve his goals. Besides Leonard, Rebney, who has degrees in sports marketing and law, has worked with Oscar De La Hoya and 49ers quarterback Steve Young. In 1998, he began representing Leonard exclusively, and is now CEO of SRL Boxing.

Also aboard in sponsorship capacities are EA Sports, the interactive entertainment software company, and Comcast-Spectacor, the country's third-largest provider of cable-TV services.

Like all promoters, in the long run Leonard will fail or succeed based on the quality of the fights he promotes. Even with the help of Rebney, ESPN2, EA Sports, and Comcast-Spectacor, it's difficult to see him competing head-to-head with Don King or Bob Arum for the really big fights. But a lot of people couldn't see him beating Hagler either.

—Nigel Collins

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
6-5-01	Frans Botha W 10 David Bostice	ESPN2	h	C+	C+	C-
Remember when Botha got robbed against Shannon Briggs a couple years back? Now everyone is even						
6-8-01	Mark Johnson W 10 Sergio Perez	ESPN2	b	B	C-	C+
Johnson not the "Too Sharp" we used to know; we'll see how far back he can come						
6-8-01	**Eric Morel KO 8 Jose DeJesus Lopez**	**ESPN2**	**WBA fl**	**A**	**C**	**B-**
Morel shows some snap to go with the speed, takes out overmatched Lopez with ease						
6-12-01	Lou Savarese KO 3 Tom Glesby	ESPN2	h	C-	C+	C
Savarese sounded so convincing when he retired after the Tyson fight, didn't he?						
6-15-01	Vivian Harris KO 3 Golden Johnson	ESPN2	jw	B-	B+	C+
Good comeback win for Harris, even if a hard thumb to the eye ended it						
6-16-01	**Felix Machado W 12 Mauricio Pastrana**	**HBO**	**IBF jb**	**A-**	**B**	**C**
It wasn't much fun to watch, but Machado's speed was better than Pastrana's punch						
6-16-01	**Tim Austin KO 6 Steve Dotse**	**HBO**	**IBF b**	**A**	**C+**	**B+**
This was the best Austin we've seen in a while; let's hope he gets a big fight soon						
6-19-01	Danny Perez KO 6 Edgar Ruiz	ESPN2	w	C+	B-	C+
Decent scrap ends when Ruiz' eyelid opens up; Perez not bad						
6-22-01	Debind Thapa KO 6 Isidro Tejedor	ESPN2	b	C-	B	B
Thapa can't fight, but one-punch knockouts like this one are why he keeps getting television dates						
6-22-01	Julian Letterlough KO 2 Ka-Dy King	ESPN2	lh	B-	B	B
We're not saying he's a Hall of Famer, but isn't there something a little Liston-esque about Letterlough?						
6-23-01	Francisco Bojado KO 2 Glenn Forde	Show	l	C+	B	B-
Remember how good Fernando Vargas looked when he was just a kid coming up? Bojado looks better						
6-23-01	**Zab Judah KO 3 Allan Vester**	**Show**	**IBF jw**	**A**	**F**	**D**
Someone forgot to tell Vester you're not required to fall every time you're touched						
6-23-01	**Kostya Tszyu W 12 Oktay Urkal**	**Show**	**WBC/WBA jw**	**A**	**C+**	**B**
Urkal tougher than expected, but not as tough as listening to Czyz, Albert, and Gray						
6-23-01	**Manny Pacquiao KO 6 Lehlo Ledwaba**	**PPV**	**IBF jf**	**A-**	**A**	**A-**
Ledwaba overwhelmed and blown out; Pacquiao's power is for real						
6-23-01	**Oscar De La Hoya W 12 Francisco Castillejo**	**PPV**	**WBC jm**	**A**	**D+**	**B-**
Forget that De La Hoya didn't score the kayo; at 154 he'll be a boxer, not a puncher						
6-24-01	Jorge Paez KO 5 Adarryl Johnson	Uni	l	C-	D	C-
Think about it: When Paez started fighting, Mohawk hairdos were still cool						
6-26-01	George Jones KO 10 Beethavean Scottland	ESPN2	lh	C+	C	F
If Max Kellerman could see this coming, how come no one else could?						
6-26-01	Victor Polo W 12 David Toledo	ESPN2	f	B	B	C+
Toledo and his brother are a great story, but great stories don't win fights; Polo's at another level						
6-29-01	Eric Harding W 10 Demetrius Jenkins	ESPN2	lh	B-	B-	D
Ugh; this made Harding against Roy Jones look like Foreman-Lyle						
6-30-01	DeMarcus Corley KO 1 Felix Flores	Show	jw	B+	A	B
We don't know how good Corley is, but he sure looked like the goods here						
6-30-01	Johnny Tapia KO 3 Cesar Soto	Show	f	A	C+	B+
Highlight: Tapia asking referee Joe Cortez, "Are you bought, too?"						
7-3-01	Ebo Elder W 10 Emmanuel Clottey	ESPN2	jw	C+	B-	B-
Anyone else think Clottey should quit fighting and concentrate on being a cutman?						
7-6-01	Efren Hinojosa W 10 Ivan Robinson	ESPN2	jw	B-	B-	C+
If ever a guy was ready to be coaxed into retirement, it is Mighty Ivan						
7-7-01	Kirk Johnson W 12 Larry Donald	HBO	h	A-	C+	C+
Anyone ready to call Johnson a big favorite over Ruiz or Holyfield? We didn't think so						
7-7-01	Hector Camacho Jr. Tech. Win 5 James Leija	HBO	jw	B+	B+	D-
Two things you can say about Camacho's old man: He had a great chin and he never quit						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Tel—Telemundo

JOEY MAXIM, 1922-2001

Maxim: Light heavyweight great dies

Joey Maxim's real name made him sound like a member of the College of Cardinals, and his critics said Giuseppe Antonio Berardinelli fought like one, too: "... a light heavyweight champion noted for his punchless devotion to peace," wrote Barney Nagler of Maxim, who died June 2 at age 79. True, only 21 of Maxim's 82 wins (against 29 defeats and 4 draws) were knockouts. But the fighter whose ring name came from manager Jack Kearns, who said he fired punches fast as a Maxim machine gun, considered boxing an art, and his bloodless but classical style served him well in an era when champions and top contenders often fought several times a month. A more appreciative sportswriter once called him "the Albert Einstein of his profession."

Maxim outpointed such worthies as Jersey Joe Walcott, Jimmy Bivins, Gus Lesnevich, and Floyd Patterson in a career that ran from 1941-'58 and landed him in the International Boxing Hall of Fame in '94.

"If a fighter has brains, he can use his jab and footwork just as effectively as a murderous punch," said Maxim, who atypically used more than that to stop Freddie Mills in 10 rounds to win the light heavyweight title in 1950. After failing to lift the heavyweight title from Ezzard Charles, Maxim defended the 175-pound title by brilliantly outboxing Sailor Bob Murphy, who'd knocked out 52 of 63 opponents. Then Maxim inflicted the only stoppage loss (KO 14) on Sugar Ray Robinson, when the then-middleweight and former welterweight champion went after his third crown on June 25, 1952. The popular notion that Maxim was more or less an innocent bystander while the 100-degree-plus temperature did in Robinson made Maxim pretty hot himself. "Did I have air-conditioning in *my* corner?" he asked. Maxim lost the title to Archie Moore later that year.

Probably too vanilla for today's fight culture and its TV-driven appetite for garishly hyped and costumed warriors, Maxim deserves to be remembered long after some of our current flavors of the month.

—Pete Ehrmann

DAMN THE INTREPID

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Mercante stops the fight, but the damage is done

It seemed a good idea to hold a fight card on the flight deck of the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum, moored in the Hudson River. The backdrop could not have been more majestic. Off to the right, the jagged New York City skyline, and to the left, the Hudson. But after George Jones knocked out Beethavean Scottland in the first bout on ESPN2's *Tuesday Night Fights* broadcast on June 26, a pall overshadowed the remainder of the evening. And it was one that would, unfortunately, linger over the boxing world for some time longer.

Hours after being injured in the fight, Scottland underwent 90 minutes of neurosurgery at Bellevue Hospital. He had three more hours of surgery the following day to relieve swelling on his brain. Six days after the fight, on July 2, Scottland, 26, died.

Scottland, from North Brentwood, Maryland, had absorbed a tremendous beating for much of the fight. On the verge of being stopped a few times, Scottland never stopped punching back, convincing referee Arthur Mercante Jr. he was able to continue. When the 10th round began, Jones, 16-0 (12), was comfortably ahead on all three judges' scorecards. However, Scottland, 26-7-2 (9), was coming off an impressive ninth-round showing, clearly his best round of the fight. As the bout neared its final 30 seconds, Jones uncorked a left hook that caused Scottland to teeter, then followed with a right that sent Scottland to the canvas.

Mercante waved off the count immediately at 2:23 of the 10th and took Scottland's mouthpiece out as doctors converged on the fallen fighter, who initially tried to get up before falling unconscious.

"I thought about stopping the fight a few times, but then I saw Scottland come back in the ninth round and fight back," said a visibly upset Mercante after Scottland was stretchered from the ring. "The kid was in the fight. The ninth round, I thought, was his best. It was one of those things that you're damned if you stop it, and damned if you don't."

It has been reported that heavyweight champion Hasim Rahman will pay for Scottland's funeral. They were friends and were both trained by Adrian Davis.

—Joe Santoliquito

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Lampley: Headed for the Hall, hampered by the hip

The California-based World Boxing Hall of Fame announced its 2001 inductees in early-June, with six former world champions heading up the list: **Aaron Pryor**, **Antonio Cervantes**, **Eusebio Pedroza**, **Nicolino Locche**, **Denny Moyer**, and **Pascual Perez**. Three non-participants are also being enshrined, including the controversial duo of **Don King** and **Jose Sulaiman**, and broadcaster **Jim Lampley**. The induction ceremony will be October 20 ... Lampley was in the news again this month when he filed suit in late-June against Sulzer Medica, a Swiss company that manufactured the artificial hip he had implanted in June 2000. "I haven't missed an assignment and I've made it to every remote location, but at considerable pain and difficulty," Lampley said of the hip shell that he says failed to adhere to his pelvis, causing slippage and pinched nerves. About 800 other lawsuits had been filed against the company as of June 1 ... There has been a professional falling out between best buddies **Roy Jones** and **Derrick Gainer**, though they claim their personal relationship has not been affected. Gainer, who was promoted by Jones, felt the light heavyweight champ wasn't getting him big enough purses, and Gainer's WBA featherweight title defense against **Juan Manuel Marquez** was promptly pulled off the Jones-**Julio Gonzalez** undercard ... U.S. Customs Service agents filed an affidavit in mid-June that accused heavyweight champion **Hasim Rahman** of helping launder $37,000 for a cousin, **William A. Fryson Jr.**, who was later imprisoned for cocaine and heroin trafficking. Rahman, who hasn't been charged with any crime, allegedly wrote checks and bought cashiers checks on suspected drug money and deposited them into Fryson's account ... WBC 130-pound champ **Floyd Mayweather** was sued in late-June by **Greg Bedford**, who claims "Pretty Boy" broke a champagne bottle over his head in a Las Vegas nightclub a week earlier. Mayweather's bodyguard denied the charge ... A cocaine possession charge against **Hector Camacho Sr.** was dropped in mid-June when the prosecution decided it could not prove its case ... Dominican super middleweight contender **Gabriel Hernandez** committed suicide in his Yonkers, New York, apartment in late-June. Hernandez, best known for an unsuccessful challenge of IBF champion **Sven Ottke** in May '99, reportedly hung himself. The 27-year-old fighter is survived by a wife and three children ... **Camille Ewald**, the woman **Mike Tyson** considered his adoptive mother, died in her Catskill, New York, home in early-June at the age of 96. "I am very lucky that she blessed me with her love and caring for most of my life," Tyson said ... **Ted Olla**, a 1950s middleweight contender from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, died in late-June at the age of 71. Olla was best known for being kayoed by a comebacking **Sugar Ray Robinson** in '55 ... **Paul Spadafora's** grandfather, **Eugene Policritti**, who became a moving, central piece of the first ESPN2 *Tuesday Night Fights* broadcast when he travelled across the country to see his grandson fight one last time, died in late-June. He had been battling cancer for several years.

Olla: Milwaukee middleweight dies at 71

THE PUNCHLINES

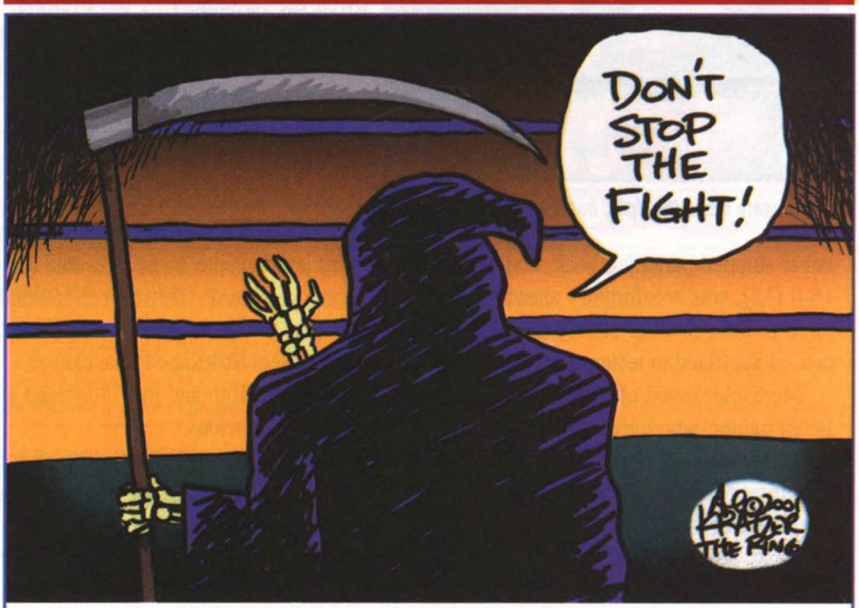
"I'm not an undercard fighter. Especially underneath a card that has an old man and some guy nobody has heard of."

—Lennox Lewis, on the idea of fighting Hasim Rahman on the John Ruiz-Evander Holyfield III show in China

"Oscar De La Hoya hits like a girl ... De La Hoya can hit me 100 times in the face and body and won't hurt me at all."

—Junior middleweight fringe contender Kirino Garcia

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



ROOTING AT RINGSIDE...

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended July 8, 2001)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Welterweight
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Middleweight
3. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Junior Lightweight
4. **ROY JONES**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Featherweight
6. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
7. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
8. **NASEEM HAMED**
   Featherweight
9. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Junior Flyweight
10. **ERIK MORALES**
    Featherweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: David Reid (10th last issue) is now campaigning as a super middleweight, and has been removed. European titlist Erland Betare replaces Reid.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Oscar De La Hoya (previously ranked second at welterweight) is installed in the number-one spot following his unanimous decision over Francisco Castillejo to capture the WBC title. This pushes everybody else down one position, including Castillejo, who was fourth last issue. Roman Karmazin (10th last issue) departs to make room for De La Hoya.

WELTERWEIGHTS: De La Hoya's move up to 154 pounds and Manuel Gomez' upset kayo of Kofi Jantuah (sixth last issue) cause a major shakeup. Andrew Lewis (formerly third), Vernon Forrest (fourth last issue), and Thomas Damgaard (fifth last issue) all move up one place. Jantuah exits, and Antonio Margarito and Gomez enter at ninth and 10th, respectively.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Previously unranked DeMarcus Corley debuts at number five, thanks to his one-round blastout of Felix Flores. Ben Tackie (ninth last issue) leaves to make room for Corley, and Hector Camacho Jr. (previously 10th) is dropped due to his spineless showing against Jesse James Leija (ranked at lightweight). Oktay Urkal is aboard at number 10 due to his strong, albeit losing, performance against number-one rated Kostya Tszyu.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Julien Lorcy is back after taking the WBA title from Takanori Hatakeyama, who tumbles from fourth to ninth. Cesar Bazan (10th last issue) departs to make room for Lorcy. Leija holds steady at number eight despite the controversial loss to Camacho.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Johnny Tapia jumps from seventh to fifth on the strength of his third-round kayo of Cesar Soto. To facilitate Tapia's advancement, Derrick Gainer (fifth last issue) and Frankie Toledo (sixth last issue) drop to sixth and seventh, respectively.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Manny Pacquiao (formerly fourth) and Lehlo Ledwaba (second last issue) change places following Pacquiao's sixth-round demolition of Ledwaba to annex the IBF crown. Antonio Cermeno (sixth last issue) and Carlos Contreras (ninth last issue) exit after both lose bouts as full-fledged featherweights. Their departures make room for Danny Romero to re-enter at number nine and Israel Vazquez to debut at 10th.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Now that he's out of prison and back in the ring, Mark Johnson enters at number five. This shoves everybody below down one spot, while Eidy Moya (10th last issue) is gone.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Samson Toyota-Thailand (sixth last issue) switches with Jesus Rojas (fifth last issue) due to greater activity. Pedro Alcazar is aboard at number seven after beating Adonis Rivas (seventh last issue). Rivas exits.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: No changes. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended July 8, 2001

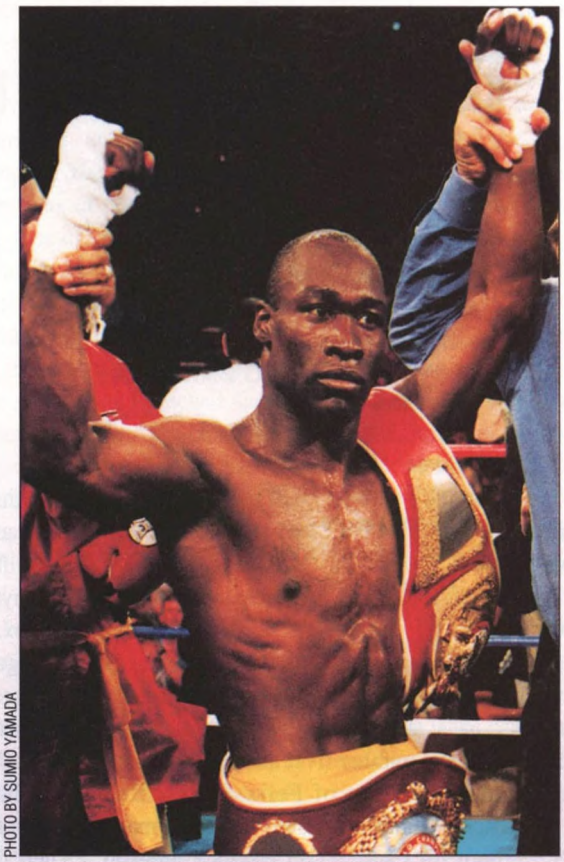


PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

DeMarcus Corley debuts in the number-five spot at 140 pounds

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore, MD *35-2 (WBC/IBF Champ)*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *38-2-1*
3. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY *48-3*
4. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine *36-1*
5. **JOHN RUIZ** Chelsea, MA *37-4 (WBA Champ)*
6. **KIRK JOHNSON** Canada *32-0-1*
7. **DAVID TUA** New Zealand *38-2*
8. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA *37-5-1*
9. **MOUNT WHITAKER** Mission Hills, CA *23-1*
10. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI *33-2*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Whittier, CA *34-2 (WBC Champ)*
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA *21-1*
3. **WINKY WRIGHT** St. Petersburg, FL *41-3*
4. **HARRY SIMON** Namibia *21-0*
5. **FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO** Spain *51-5*
6. **BRONCO McKART** Monroe, MI *44-3*
7. **YORY BOY CAMPAS** Mexico *78-4*
8. **ALEX BUNEMA** Dallas, TX *19-2-1*
9. **J.C. CANDELO** Denver, CO *23-3-3*
10. **SHIBATA FLORES** Mexico *42-8*

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Mexico *53-3*
2. **NASEEM HAMED** England *35-1*
3. **ERIK MORALES** Mexico *40-0 (WBC Champ)*
4. **GUTY ESPADAS** Mexico *34-3*
5. **JOHNNY TAPIA** Albuquerque, NM *50-2-2*
6. **DERRICK GAINER** Pensacola, FL *38-5 (WBA Champ)*
7. **FRANKIE TOLEDO** Paterson, NJ *40-5-1 (IBF Champ)*
8. **MBULELO BOTILE** South Africa *27-2*
9. **FRED NORWOOD** St. Louis, MO *37-1-1*
10. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico *35-2*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **BONES ADAMS** Henderson, KY *41-3-3 (WBA Champ)*
2. **MANNY PACQUAIO** Philippines *33-2 (IBF Champ)*
3. **WILLIE JORRIN** Sacramento, CA *28-0 (WBC Champ)*
4. **LEHLO LEDWABA** South Africa *33-2-1*
5. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ** Mexico *28-1-2*
6. **OSCAR LARIOS** Mexico *40-3-1*
7. **MICHAEL BRODIE** England *30-1*
8. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA** Venezuela *19-2-1*
9. **DANNY ROMERO** Albuquerque, NM *41-3-1*
10. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ** Mexico *30-2*

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **TIM AUSTIN** Cincinnati, OH *23-0-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **PAULIE AYALA** Ft. Worth, TX *32-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand *31-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **ADAN VARGAS** Mexico *36-2-1*
5. **MARK JOHNSON** Washington, D.C. *39-1*
6. **JOHNNY BREDAHL** Denmark *50-2*
7. **JORGE LACIERVA** Mexico *19-3-3*
8. **MAURICIO MARTINEZ** Panama *19-3-1*
9. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico *24-3*
10. **HUGO DIANZO** Mexico *26-6-1*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ**
   Germany 32-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 46-3 (WBA Champ)
3. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 28-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 39-12-1
5. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ**
   Argentina 32-3-1
6. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England 28-5
7. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS**
   Pensacola, FL 34-5-1
8. **JAMES TONEY**
   Las Vegas, NV 61-4-2
9. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   France 42-2
10. **LOUIS AZILLE**
    Jersey City, NJ 16-0-2

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL 44-1 (WBC/WBA/IBF Champ)
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 44-0
3. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadephia, PA 20-1-1
4. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX 42-6-1
5. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 41-3
6. **CHRIS JOHNSON**
   Canada 26-2-1
7. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 27-0
8. **BRUNO GIRARD**
   France 39-2-1
9. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 17-1
10. **GREG WRIGHT**
    Bronx, NY 18-6-2

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 31-0
2. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 23-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 23-1-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 25-4-1
5. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 36-8
6. **THOMAS TATE**
   Houston, TX 40-6
7. **DINGAAN THOBELA**
   South Africa 40-8-2
8. **JAMES BUTLER**
   Bronx, NY 18-1
9. **GLENN CATLEY**
   England 26-4
10. **MADS LARSEN**
    Denmark 37-1

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Philadelphia, PA 39-2-1 (IBF/WBC Champ)
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico 40-0 (WBA Champ)
3. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 32-2-1
4. **ARMAND KRAJNC**
   Sweden 24-0
5. **KEITH HOLMES**
   Washington, D.C. 35-3
6. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France 32-4-1
7. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 32-0
8. **CARL DANIELS**
   St. Louis, MO 47-3-1
9. **ANTONIO PERUGINO**
   Italy 17-0
10. **ERLAND BETARE**
    France 30-7-2

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 37-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **ANDREW LEWIS**
   Guyana 21-0-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 32-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 25-0
5. **DANIEL SANTOS**
   Puerto Rico 24-2-1
6. **JAMES PAGE**
   Pittsburg, CA 25-4
7. **RAFAEL PINEDA**
   Colombia 34-3
8. **SHANNAN TAYLOR**
   Australia 28-1-1
9. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 25-3
10. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
    Mexico 21-10

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia 27-1-1 (WBA/WBC Champ)
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 27-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 47-3
4. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 35-3
5. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 26-1-1
6. **ENER JULIO**
   Colombia 21-3
7. **RANDALL BAILEY**
   Miami, FL 24-1
8. **MICKY WARD**
   Lowell, MA 36-10
9. **TERRONN MILLETT**
   St. Louis, MO 24-2-1
10. **OKTAY URKAL**
    Germany 28-1

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 43-4-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 32-2-1
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA 33-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 49-2-2 (WBA Champ)
5. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 37-5-1
6. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 33-0
7. **COLIN DUNNE**
   England 33-1
8. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA**
   San Antonio, TX 42-6-2
9. **TAKANORI HATAKEYAMA**
   Japan 24-2-3
10. **JUAN LAZCANO**
    El Paso, TX 27-2-1

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 26-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 25-0 (WBA Champ)
3. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 29-0
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 35-1
5. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 19-1 (IBF Champ)
6. **JONGKWON BAEK**
   South Korea 22-1-1
7. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia 13-2-1
8. **JOHN BROWN**
   Atlantic City, NJ 23-8
9. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 46-4-1
10. **TONTCHO TONTCHEV**
    Bulgaria 24-0

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 24-2-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **CELES KOBAYASHI**
   Japan 23-4-3 (WBA Champ)
3. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 21-3-1 (IBF Champ)
4. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines 43-3-2
5. **SAMSON TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand 40-0
6. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela 34-8-3
7. **PEDRO ALCAZAR**
   Panama 21-1-1
8. **IN JOO CHO**
   South Korea 18-2
9. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 25-3
10. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
    Mexico 19-0

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 30-0 (WBA Champ)
2. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 25-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 39-2 (WBC Champ)
4. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa 18-1
5. **MEDGOEN TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand 24-1
6. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand 39-1
7. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 46-3
8. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 22-0-1
9. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 11-1-1
10. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
    Venezuela 16-0

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico 49-0-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 23-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **PICHIT C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 23-1
4. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua 29-2-1 (WBA Champ)
5. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 26-1
6. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa 17-2-2
7. **WILL GRIGSBY**
   St. Paul, MN 15-2-1
8. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 26-3-1
9. **HIDENOBU HONDA**
   Japan 23-1
10. **NELSON DIEPPA**
    Puerto Rico 20-2-1

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

1. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 44-1-2 (WBA Champ)
2. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 25-1-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico 18-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan 21-7
5. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 30-6-1
6. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 13-2-1
7. **WANDEE SINGWANGCHA**
   Thailand 28-4
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 33-2
9. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 24-1
10. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
    Japan 13-0-3

NEW FACES

RANDY GRIFFIN

Super Middleweight

By Joe Santoliquito

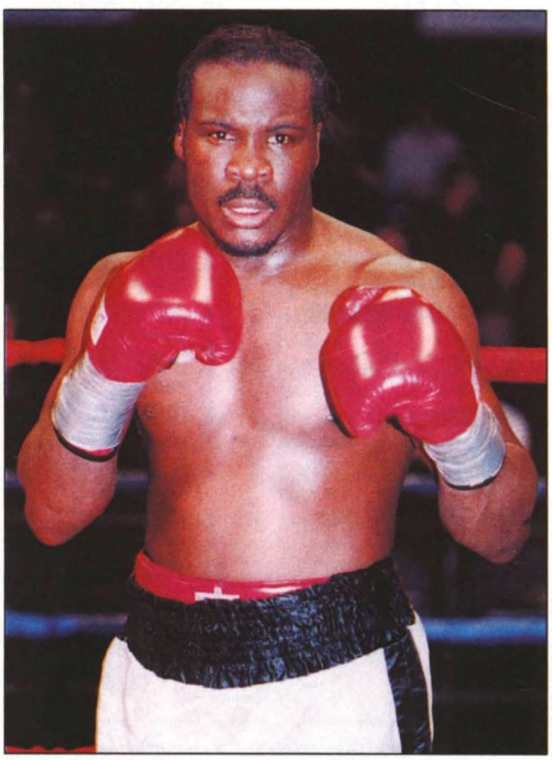


PHOTO BY ANGIE CARLINO

Randy Griffin faces a different reality than many aspiring pro boxers. Turtle-eyed and groggy, Griffin's glamorous life as an undefeated fighter often begins around three or four in the morning, rocking his crying son back to sleep, knowing that in another hour or two, he'll have to get back up for a four-mile run before heading off to work.

Griffin's day job brings a whole new set of standards many of today's pampered prospects never have to confront. As a union laborer, Griffin is responsible for eight hours of lugging heavy metal beams, and mixing and moving cement. It's his back that puts up those tall big-city buildings. It's his joints that ache from the constant vibrations of the jackhammer.

"To be honest, I don't know how I've made it to this point," said Griffin, an exciting Philadelphia super middleweight. "I'm doing it the hard way. It teaches you to appreciate everything, because you just don't know how far you'll make it. I think about what I go through to box all of the time, but it pushes me every day to get home and spend time with my wife. To be a success in boxing is very important to me. The main reason why I'm doing all of this is because of the fighters back in the day who did this."

Then Griffin recites the list: Sugar Ray Robinson, Jake LaMotta, and even Philadelphia's own Joe Frazier had to bust his hump before being able to support his family as a pro fighter.

"Plus, I love the sport," Griffin said. "When you love the sport so much, all that pain of the day goes away once you hit that bag. I feel sometimes I have to give something up, because boxing isn't paying for everything and my job is. But the fans I've got push me. A lot of kids in the neighborhood look up to me."

It's the sweet taste of success that also motivates Griffin. After Griffin defeated Sebastian Hill via six-round unanimous decision on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, on June 15 at the legendary Blue Horizon, he was treated like the next coming of Oscar De La Hoya by his co-workers the following day.

It was the first time any of Griffin's pals were able to catch him on TV. Before Griffin knew it, he was being besieged by more ques-

(Continued on page 90)

PRO RECORD

2000		
June 20	Cornell Hester, Philadelphia, PA	KO 1
Sept. 12	Vandiver Howard, Philadelphia	KO 4
Dec. 8	Chuck Berry, Philadelphia	KO 2
2001		
Jan. 12	Iman Green, Philadelphia	KO 2
Feb. 21	Lamont Cooper, Atlantic City	KO 1
March 16	Ronald Boddie, Philadelphia	KO 2
May 18	Dan Sheehan, Ledyard, CT	KO 4
June 15	Sebastian Hill, Philadelphia	W 6

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
8	8	0	0	7

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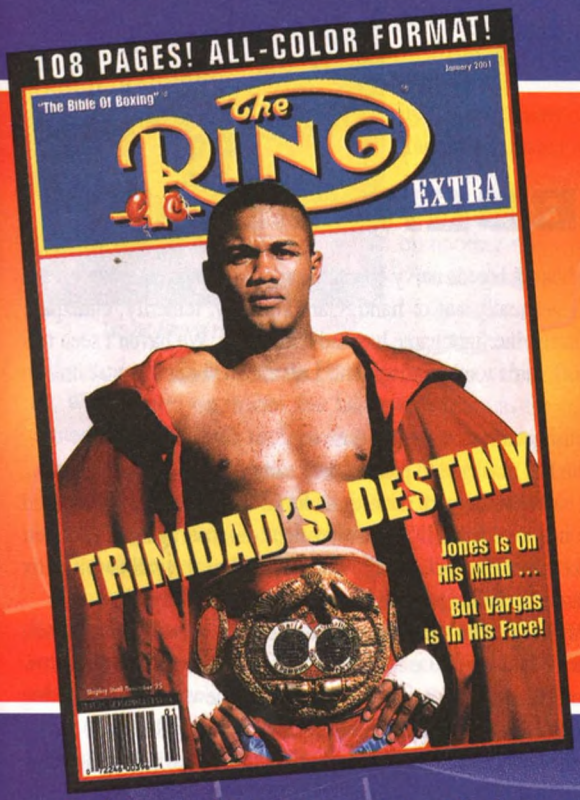

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RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

GALL BLABBER

The nerve of some people. Granted, boxing breeds nervy characters the way stagnant water breeds mosquitoes, but sometimes things get really out of hand. Gall, audacity, temerity, chutzpah, balls—call it what you'd like, but lately, the fight game has had a glut of it. We haven't seen this much raw nerve revealed since Dustin Hoffman's tooth met up with Laurence Olivier's dental drill in *Marathon Man*.

You want examples? Well, here goes. Just get a load of the big ones on … :

Roy Jones: Here's a brilliant stylist who has managed to pull off the nearly impossible feat of having a Hall of Fame career and a disappointing career at the very same time. Jones has indefinitely postponed that proposed jump to heavyweight and has avoided a light heavyweight defense against unbeaten Dariusz Michalczewski for what seems like eons. And yet, the 175-pound king has the gall to tell Felix Trinidad that if he wants to get it on, he'll have to challenge Jones by January or make other plans.

The reason for his impatience, Jones says, is that he's getting older and doesn't want to have to wait around. What a laugh! This from a guy who'd find an excuse for not signing on the dotted line tomorrow if you told him he was getting a $10-million purse and 25 percent of the pay-per-view revenue for facing Laila Ali. Setting a January deadline for Trinidad is the same as saying there will be no fight.

Is Jones, who has talked about trading shots with heavyweights, now leery of a guy who was a skinny welterweight as recently as two years ago? If not, why even risk creating that impression? Perhaps Jones is playing games in the hope of getting the upper hand during contract negotiations. Contract negotiations that should last about as long as The Watergate Hearings if Jones is involved.

Miriam Cedarbaum: In a truly nutty decision handed down in June, Manhattan Federal District Court judge Cedarbaum had the gall to rule that heavyweight king Hasim Rahman can't fight anyone for 18 months unless the opponent answers to the name of Lennox Lewis. (Which significantly shrinks the list of Rahman's potential opponents, to say the least.) Geez, anyone who judges that unfairly ought to be given a scorecard, a pencil, and a job with the Nevada State Athletic Commission.

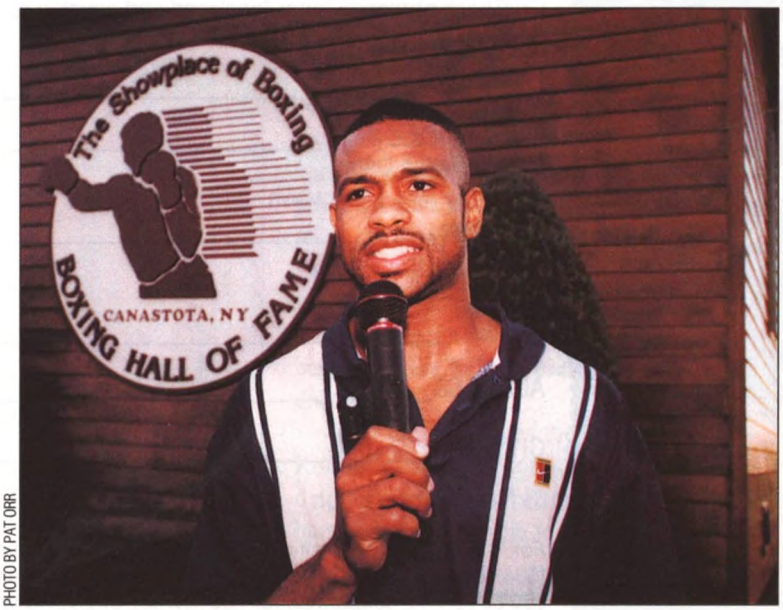


PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Jones: Hall of Fame disappointment

Cedarbaum ignored a clause in the original Rahman-Lewis contract that permitted "The Rock" to take an interim bout before granting Lewis a rematch. Obviously, the judge never saw Lewis' performance against Rahman the first time around or she would have held the Briton in contempt of sport. If you forget about rematch clauses, politics, purses, cable networks, and everything else for a second and just focus on worthiness, Lewis deserves another crack at Rahman about as much as the XFL deserves another crack at Saturday prime time. Lewis didn't think enough of the ticket buyers and television audience to train hard the first time, but now he's vowing to take his multimillion-dollar job seriously and give the performance we expect.

Isn't that nice of him?

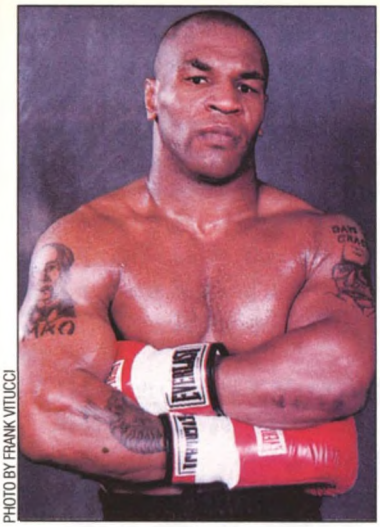


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Tyson: Needs reality check

Hey, Lennox, do us a favor and take up acting full-time. Or better yet, go negotiate for a fight with Roy Jones. That ought to keep you out of our sight for a while.

Mike Tyson: Another charmer with enough audacity to fill a convoy of tractor-trailers. He pissed away the prime of his career, but still holds out hope of embarking on another reign of terror. (No, not in a hotel room, but on the throne.) There he was, suing to get the first crack at Rahman, a champion he deems beatable. In Tyson's mind (and that of the WBC ratings committee that has installed him as the mandatory contender), wins over such powerhouses as Andrew Golota, Lou Savarese, and Julius Francis make "Leg-Iron Mike" worthier than Wladimir Klitschko or Kirk Johnson when it comes to a title shot and the hefty payday that accompanies it.

Tyson's deserves a big check, all right. A big *reality* check.

Oscar De La Hoya: Ah yes, De La Hoya, the Sugar Ray Robinson of chutzpah. A few days before he lifted the WBC super welterweight crown from Francisco Castillejo, "The Golden Boy" was asked about the likelihood of a rematch with Sugar Shane Mosley.

"Let's say I fight Mosley," De La Hoya replied. "He makes $2-million a fight. Just because I'm Oscar, he's going to ask for $15-million. That's not going to happen. He's going to have to fight me on my terms, on my date, and for my title at 154 pounds. Same with Trinidad. We're talking about money. Let's say he loses to [Bernard] Hopkins. He's going to have to come back down to 154 pounds and fight me to make money."

Apparently, De La Hoya needs to contact THE RING's back issue department and place an order. If he re-reads those accounts of his showdowns with Mosley and Trinidad, he'll be reminded that he didn't get the decision in either of them. Mosley clearly deserved the verdict. And while it's true that De La Hoya was robbed against Trinidad, "Tito" has used subsequent victories over David Reid, Fernando Vargas, and William Joppy to vault over The Golden Boy in the pound-for-pound ratings.

When it comes to rematches, De La Hoya can play the big shot role all he wants, but both Mosley and Trinidad have a win over him on their resumes. If he desires to erase those blemishes, impress the historians, and make his sleep more restful, The Golden Boy needs Mosley and Trinidad much more than they need him. The sooner he realizes that, the better his chances are of securing those opportunities for vengeance. And the more likely he'll be to stop talking so stupid.

Mark Kram's critics: The former *Sports Illustrated* writer has authored a book that's unflattering to national hero/revered icon/tragic sympathy figure Muhammad Ali, so, not surprisingly, everyone from literary critics to boxing fans have been telling Kram to cram it, uh, you know where.

Kram's crime in *Ghosts Of Manila: The Fateful Blood Feud Between Muhammad Ali And Joe Frazier* was to suggest that Ali was at times a cruel, insensitive boor and that he wasn't nearly the social pioneer that his supporters have insisted he was. All correct observations, by the way. But judging by the reaction to his words, you'd think Kram had denied the existence of the Holocaust, mocked the tenets of Christianity, or advanced the theory that the crack epidemic was a CIA plot designed to destroy Black America.

You'll never find a bigger Ali fan than me, but that doesn't mean that his bad side gets glossed over in this column. At its worst, Ali's behavior was abhorrent. He taunted overmatched opponents during battle, mocked certain rivals' physical appearance, and even called the immensely proud Joe Frazier an "Uncle Tom." At some point, though, Ali came to be viewed as a treasure and everyone chose to forget about his transgressions.

The same thing happened a few years ago in tennis, when Jimmy Connors staged an amazing run to the U.S. Open semifinals at the age of 39. Suddenly a beloved cult figure, Connors got standing ovations everywhere he went and never saw a negative bit of press. His ugliness, everything from pointing to his crotch while arguing with a female linesman to calling an umpire "an abortion," were conveniently forgotten. Couldn't let reality intrude on all those warm and fuzzy feelings.

Hey, Kram wrote the truth and had the guts to do so. Revealing feet of clay and exposing myths isn't an easy job and it's certain to make an author a target. But it's not Kram who's displaying the chutzpah, it's the people who are stubbornly denying the truth. ■

De La Hoya: Has he forgotten that Mosley beat him?

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME: KELLERMAN'S TRAGIC AILMENT

Exclusive report: ESPN2 boxing analyst Max Kellerman has come down with a mysterious illness that's baffled specialists from the very highest bastions of medicine. Though apparently not life-threatening, it's a malady with uniquely dreadful symptoms.

To wit, they make it impossible for poor Kellerman to discuss any topic of any kind without screaming at the top of his lungs that fellow-New Yorker Zab Judah is a marvelous fighter who will someday rule boxing and perhaps all the civilized world and could have destroyed any fighter from any era.

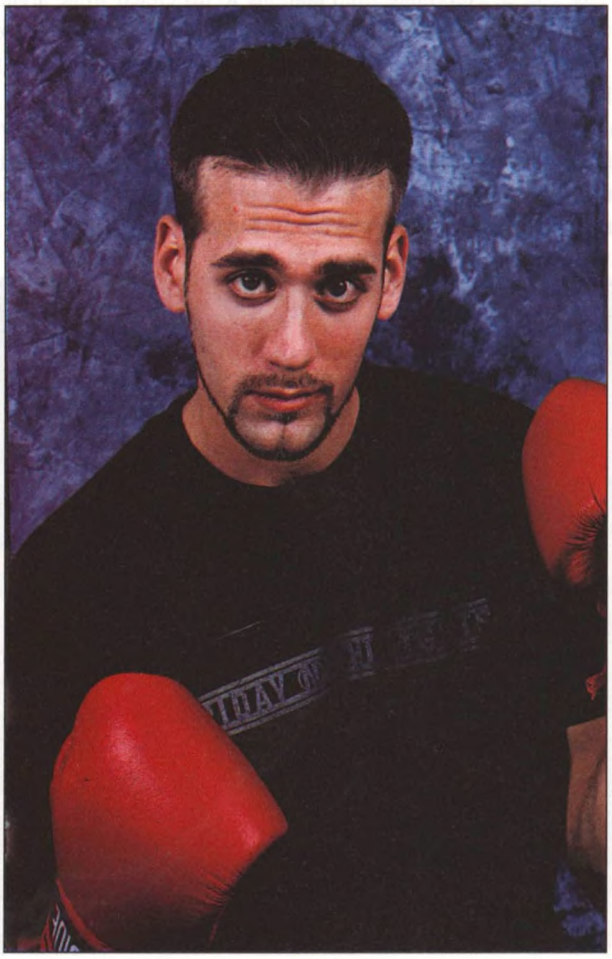


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Kellerman is duking it out with a serious disorder

Physicians frantically seek a cure for Kellerman's debilitating condition even as they remain mystified by its cause. Some of them theorize it's some sort of undetectable virus. Others believe he may have inhaled too many greenhouse gasses from New York's notorious gypsy taxis. Whatever the cause, the symptoms are intensifying. Kellerman now has an almost round-the-clock need to relentlessly praise Judah at ear-splitting volume when it has nothing to do with what he or anybody around him was just talking about.

Working against time, the doctors ultimately concluded Kellerman should be treated like someone with a severe chemical dependency. So they're sending him to the Betty Ford Clinic. There he will undergo group therapy with other fanatics who harbor related obsessions that aren't actually drug addictions. Some of them, for instance, still won't shut up about *Gilligan's Island*.

The Ford doctors, we're told, plan to punish Kellerman's never-ending references to Judah with small electric shocks. They will also make him repeatedly watch tapes of Judah ending every sentence with "You know what I'm saying?" Simultaneously, Kellerman will be force-fed large quantities of food from the Fantasy Springs Casino restaurant in Indio, California.

Our heart goes out to Kellerman and his family at this terrible time. Meanwhile, despite his tragic condition, Max was kind enough to exchange a few words with us. The conversation went as follows:

The Ring: Max, we're really sorry to learn of your misfortune. It must be hard on you.

MK: Sure, it's been rough. But you just have to play the hand you're dealt. Zab Judah would have made Jack Dempsey cry for his mama.

The Ring: You know, Max, this hideous compulsion of yours can be especially tough on those around you. Yet we understand your compassionate colleagues at ESPN2 have resolved to keep toughing it out at your side. How can they stand it?

MK: Off-camera, they drink a lot of Maalox. But really, they're a great bunch of dudes. If he put on a couple of pounds, Zab Judah could chew up Tito Trinidad in one round and spit him out.

The Ring: Good luck, Max. Get some rest.

MK: Thanks, Ivan. May the Zab be with you.

BOXING'S ELVIS: If Don King ran the Disney Corporation, you can bet he'd lure Bugs Bunny away from Looney Tunes. And then feed him to Pluto.

King reminds me of Los Angeles' new mayor, James K. Hahn. When he was elected largely on the strength of a nasty, mud-slinging campaign, Hahn explained later, "Campaigns are not prom dates."

After dangling a suitcase full of cash to lure newly minted heavyweight champ Hasim Rahman away from Cedric Kushner, King Babble-On once again owned bragging rights to all three heavyweight belts. King's always understood better than anyone that the boxing biz is not a prom date.

Poor Kushner. He went from king of the mountain to chump of the month in one punishing day. And to think, last year I berated him to his face for contemplating a match between over-the-hill Arturo Gatti and the impossibly slicker Sugar Shane Mosley. Next to King's villainy, Kushner's busted plan now looks practically harmless.

King's latest confiscation held up in court, and this is not good for heavyweight boxing. King's idea of a compelling heavyweight title fight is staging endless sequels of Evander Holyfield vs. John Ruiz.

As the heavyweight picture was being sorted out, lawsuits flew around like wet hornets. Everyone was trying to dictate who should fight whom with which promoter and on what network and who gets the beer concession. No heavyweight could venture into a ring without two attorneys whispering in his ear.

Meanwhile, hug-master Henry Akinwande snuck back into the top 10 ratings of two alphabet gangs, proving the heavyweight division was once again in worse shape than Butterbean after two weeks in a doughnut shop.

Part of the problem is the once-magnificent Holyfield, who keeps taking up network space by getting title fights. Still determined to round up all three belts before riding off into the sunset with his posse of love children, the "Deal Formerly Known As Real" is fast deteriorating into boxing's version of the washed-up, end-of-the-line Elvis. The difference is that Elvis knew he couldn't hack it anymore. When shot fighter Holyfield steps in the ring, he apparently still thinks he's the same Holyfield who turned pro during the Reagan Administration.

PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/DKP

Did Max really say that Zab would chew up and spit out Trinidad?

It's starting to look like Holyfield will end his career fighting for $1,200 purses on the Southern circuit. Much like Elvis, who ended his wearing a girdle and an inch of makeup.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

To Goldman, these three symbolize all that is wrong with heavyweight boxing

OSCAR'S NEW STRATEGIES: Against Francisco Castillejo, Oscar De La Hoya: (1) Effectively threw many more right hands (better); (2) Carried his left low, often below his waist (worse); (3) Looked his opponent in the eye during the referee's ring instructions, instead of up at the overhead lights (better); (4) Slipped more punches by bending at the waist (probably better); and (5) Sounded like a love child of his often obnoxious trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr. and showbiz egomaniac Roseanne when interviewed afterward (much worse).

FINAL WORD: If Tito Trinidad convincingly beats Bernard Hopkins, you have to favor him over Roy Jones. Roy hasn't been in tough since the hula hoop was in vogue. ■

BEING THERE

FINLEY'S BOXING CLUB

PHOTOS BY MIKE GREENHILL

IF YOU GO

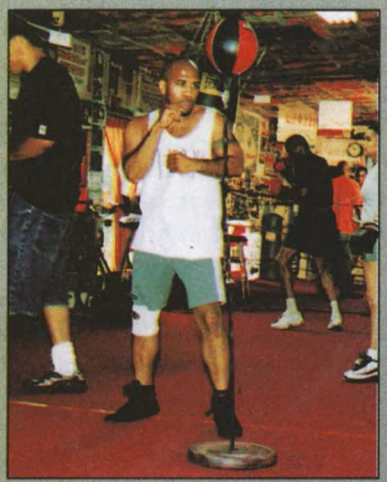
Location: 518 Maryland Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20002; phone: 202-544-9132.

Directions: Take I-395 and get off at Pennsylvania Avenue. From there take 10th Street, which intersects with Maryland Avenue. It's east of Capitol Hill in D.C.'s northeast section, 10 blocks from Capitol Hill and Union Station.

Membership: $75-$110 per month, depending on if you need a trainer provided by the club; $10-$15 per day. Open 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and Saturdays from 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

Who to look out for: Former flyweight and junior bantamweight champion Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson is a regular, as are Daniel Attah, Darryl Tyson, and DeMarcus Corley.

Advice to greenhorns: If you meet an 80-something-year-old man they call "Reverend" (a.k.a. Roland Pryor), beware of his sleight-of-hand magic. Like Don King, he can turn your $10 into a quarter before you know what happened. And make sure you ask him what the rules are before you agree to play him in a game of checkers. They tend to fluctuate depending on the circumstance. But it's only a nickel or dime wager per game.



The Ring's own Johnnie Whitehead hits the double-ended bag

Tyrone Russ holds the pads for Derrick Price in the makeshift Finley's ring

By Johnnie Whitehead

You might have an easier time fitting seven portly passengers in a compact car. But while it may feel every bit as cramped and smell just as pungent, Finley's Boxing Club has a nostalgic appeal that you won't find in your average Ford Festiva.

The club isn't a marvel of modern architecture, but it makes up for that with its many characters and its undeniable character, which has kept folks coming back for more than 40 years. And they probably will continue to do so until its rickety foundation—you can hear it squeak with every little step you take up the steep staircase—can no longer support the weight of the Washington, D.C., boxing enthusiasts.

"This is the number-one avenue in this area for the boxing community," said Jim Finley, 72, who opened the doors of this

Posters line both sides of the steep, creaky staircase

The entrance is in the rear of the auto shop

Watch out for the Reverend's trickery

The old-fashioned Jim Finley

club tucked in the northeast section in 1960.

It wasn't supposed to happen this way. This sweatbox was just a place for Finley, who owned an auto repair shop that still operates below, and his friends to escape and work out. Finley put up a few bags one day, and because word of mouth travels so fast, before he knew it he had a second business.

And just like that, light heavyweight great Bob Foster was training at the club for his '68 title fight with Dick Tiger. So did George Foreman, George Chuvalo, Ernie Terrell, Ike Williams, Holly Mims, and Larry Holmes.

"It was somewhat unusual at the time," said Finley, a Greenville, South Carolina, native who not only was young to be an entrepreneur at age 31, but stood out in an era when black-owned establishments began to disappear with the onset of integration. "There was only one other boxing club in town."

Signs, signs, everywhere signs

Finley, who spent most of his time working at his garage below, assumed day-to-day operations of the gym in 1989, after he sold the building. He realizes there will come a time when Finley's Boxing Club will be nothing more than a renovated apartment building. Gone will be the horde of photographs of club members that cover the walls and ceiling and the posters from local shows that most people never heard of. College film and photography students will lose a popular place to practice their craft, too.

"Hardly a week passes without someone calling me about a scene they want to put in a film," said Finley, who had Burt Lancaster stop by in 1971 to film a scene for *Scorpio* and, more recently, lent his gym for a scene in the Morgan Freeman film *Along Came A Spider*.

Finley's has a low angular ceiling, a washer and dryer, a stove, two TVs, boxing VHS tapes galore, a lovable German Shepherd that lives on the fenced-in rooftop, almost every RING magazine ever printed, and boxing trinkets and artifacts that are hard to come by. When Mike Tyson stopped by to train for a week earlier this year, he offered to purchase a regulation-size ring to replace the makeshift one that's padded with carpet and boxed off with bullrope. Problem is, it would take up half the floor space. Because the 120-year-old building is in a residential area that's a "non-conforming zone," additions and upgrades aren't allowed to preserve it.

Finley can relate because he is a non-conformist by nature.

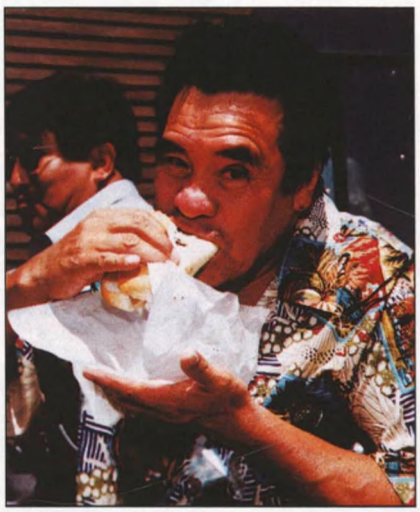
"I've always been an outsider," said Finley, who claims he has never managed, trained, or sponsored any fighters and that he was inspired to take up the sport after reading Nat Fleischer's *Black Dynamite*. "I don't have a financial interest in boxing, though I've had plenty of opportunities. I do this simply because I love it, and I'll keep going until I'm unable to walk up those steps." ■

CAMERA CLICKS

International Boxing Hall of Fame Induction Weekend

PHOTOS BY PAT ORR

Just in case he can't convince Roy Jones to get in the ring with him, Felix Trinidad is working on lining up other light heavyweight champs to fight, and the great Bob Foster is one guy who, even at age 62, probably wouldn't duck him. Foster, who reigned as 175-pound champ for over six years, was inducted into the Hall of Fame as part of the inaugural class of 1990.

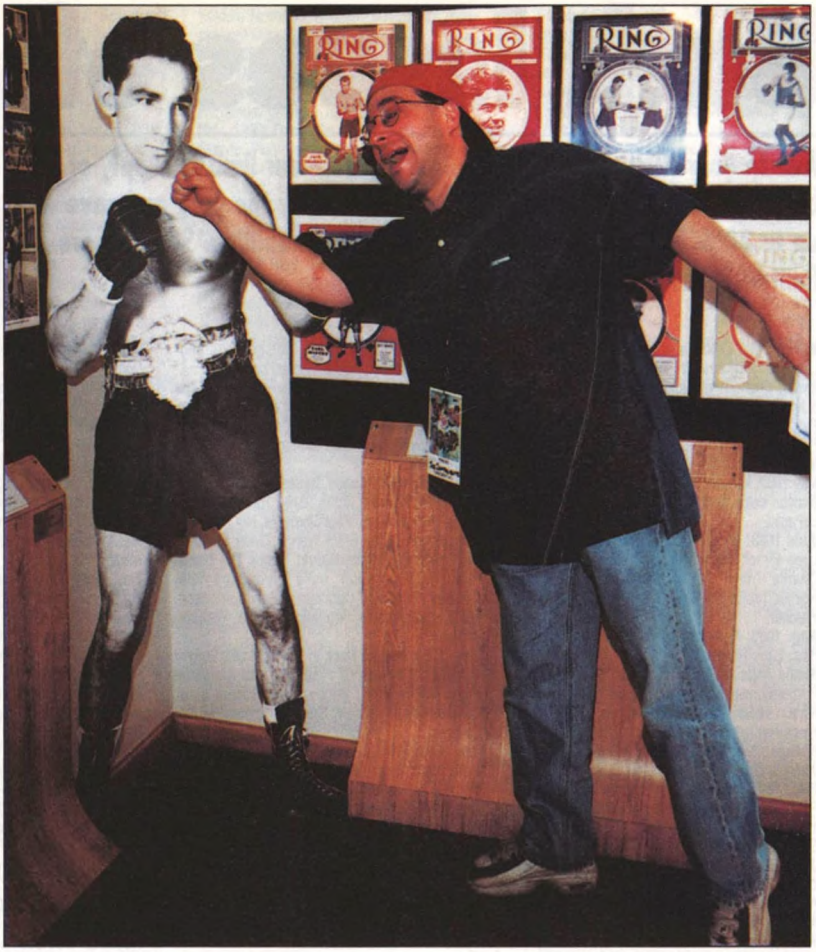


It looks like Ruben Olivares isn't too worried about making weight anymore. The legendary former bantamweight and featherweight champ was known as a heavy partier back in his day, but Canastota's tasty sandwiches appear to be his number-one vice now. And luckily for "Rockabye Ruben," if he spilled any ketchup or mustard on that shirt he's wearing, the stain would probably blend right in.

Tony Sirico, who stars as Paulie Walnuts on The Sopranos *and served as grand marshal of this year's Hall of Fame parade, gets familiar with three-division former champion Iran "The Blade" Barkley. Sirico probably wouldn't have such a big smile on his face if he knew what Barkley does to people who call themselves "Hit Man."*

Hall of Fame Weekend is about bringing boxing's past and its present together, as this shot of active referee Michael Ortega and his father, former welterweight contender Gaspar Ortega, illustrates. This photo should make for a lovely family portrait to put on the Ortegas' wall, and on Charles Brewer's wall, it should make for a lovely dartboard.

Raising cane: Former world middleweight champ Vito Antuofermo was in attendance at the Hall of Fame this year, threatening to fire off a few rounds if he isn't inducted soon.



Intent on proving Hall of Fame featherweight Willie Pep is not the defensive genius many experts consider him to be, THE RING's own Joe Santoliquito lines up "The Will O' The Wisp" for a right hand. Word from those in attendance is that Pep can now lay claim to winning two rounds without ever throwing a punch.

Hall of Fame welterweight champ Kid Gavilan shows that he's still a youthful "Keed" at age 75, as he administers a right to the gut of boxing historian Hank Kaplan. Shortly after this photo was taken, Gavilan wound up for his famous bolo punch, but the delivery is a little slower than it used to be and the punch still hadn't landed as we went to press.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Here's a group photo from the '92 induction weekend, featuring an assortment of all-time greats ... and Chuck Wepner. With all due respect to "The Bayonne Bleeder," he has about as much chance of being enshrined in Canastota as Butterbean does.

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Jan. 1985: Holmes-Bonecrusher Color Action. Plus: Gerry Cooney, pro debuts (Breland, Hill, Taylor, Biggs, Whitaker, Holyfield), Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza.

Feb. 1985: Showdown: Page Clobbers Coetzee For WBA Title. Plus: Larry Holmes, lightweights, Cooney-Chaplin, McCallum-Minchillo.

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May 1985: The Rematch In Reno: Bramble-Mancini Color Action. Plus: Donald Curry, Aaron Pryor, McGuigan-LaPorte.

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Nov. 1987: Tyson Wins Heavyweight Triple Crown. Plus: McCallum-Curry, Carlos Monzon interview, triple champions, Orlin & Terry Norris, Ramirez-Alli, Fenech-Richardson, Matthew Hilton.

Dec. 1987: Spinks & Lewis: Boxing's Beastie Boys. Plus: Starling-Breland, Ramzi Hassan, Honeyghan-Hatcher, Holyfield-Ocasio.

Jan. 1988: Darrin Van Horn-Million Dollar Baby? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Hill-Stewart, Juan Coggi, great hookers, AIDS.

Feb. 1988: Gold Outshines Glitter: Tate Tops Olajide. Plus: Tyson-Biggs, Kalambay-Barkley, Hearns-Roldan, fights we'd like to see.

April 1988: Evander Holyfield: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Special year-end awards, Holyfield-Qawi II, Foreman-Sekorski, Hill-Angulo.

May 1988: George Foreman: "I Can Beat Tyson." Plus: Tyson-Holmes, Jesse Benavides, Showtime, no-knockout artists.

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Oct. 1988: Mike Tyson: What Price Glory? Plus: Tyson-Spinks, Hearns-Barkley, Davey Moore.

Nov. 1988: Donny Lalonde: "Sugar Ray is Out Of His Mind!" Plus: Hall of Fame selections (Carlos Ortiz, Joe Brown, Billy Graham, Cus D'Amato, Jimmy Jacobs), Nunn-Tate, Molinares-Starling, Honeyghan-Chung, '88 Olympians.

Jan. 1989: Meldrick Taylor: Philly Phenom. Plus: Marvin Hagler, Alex Wallau, Taylor-McGirt, Olympic results.

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Aug. 1990: Chavez: His Greatness Confirmed ... Is He The Best Mexican Fighter Ever? Plus: Matthew Saad Muhammad, John L. Sullivan & Mike Tyson, Michael Nunn, Mark Breland, Harold Johnson, Cus D'Amato, Louis-Godoy (color).

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OSCAR DE LA HOYA

IS STAR POWER THE ONLY POWER HE HAS LEFT?

Another title belt for "The Golden Boy." De La Hoya blasts Spain's Francisco Castillejo into the ropes en route to winning the WBC super welterweight title via unanimous 12-round decision in Las Vegas.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Although De La Hoya is famous for his left hook, his right hand played a much bigger role in defeating Castillejo. De La Hoya jarred the defending champion with it in the opening moments of the fight and went on to land it frequently throughout the contest.

By Johnnie Whitehead

He's no longer the king of the pound-for-pounders, and some question if he's even the king of his new domain. Despite winning another world title in a fourth weight class, few knees will be quivering at the prospect of being struck by Oscar De La Hoya. But even though his punching power seems to have decreased incrementally as he moves up in weight, one thing remains the same: De La Hoya is and probably always will be the reigning and undisputed King of Contradictions.

De La Hoya vanquished game but limited Francisco Castillejo on June 23, and in the process annexed the WBC super welterweight title via unanimous decision after 12 one-sided rounds. "The Golden Boy" took a few punches, and the splotched left side of his faced carried the hard evidence. That, however, doesn't compare to the punishment the former U.S. Olympic gold medalist has taken from fans, the media, and former associates. He has deserved every jab for his double-talk, for passing the buck regarding his failures, for his inflammatory comments toward his former promoter, for disrespecting those who have been loyal to him, for his uneven performances, and, most importantly, for being afraid to be himself—and not offer any apologies for it.

"I felt strong, but there was something missing," De La Hoya said after thrashing Castillejo, perhaps thinking out loud. "Did I eat the wrong foods? Did I sweat out too much? Maybe this isn't my natural weight? Maybe I'm going back to 147?"

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

Although he failed to knock out Castillejo, De La Hoya finally put his adversary down in the final round with a blistering right. He might have finished the job, but the bell rang immediately after referee Vic Drakulich completed the eight-count.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Then, as is his custom, The Great Contradictor—who has lashed out in the past at the sport's sanctioning groups for taking advantage of boxers, but earlier in the week called the WBC a "respectable organization"—rose to the surface to further muddy the waters.

"I'll probably stay here at 154. In camp, everything was perfect, but the energy level was low tonight. But I have to move to 160 pretty soon."

Confused? You're not alone. So is De La Hoya.

Even so, he's still the king of the box office outside of the heavyweight division. How many fighters can draw 12,480 fans at Las Vegas' MGM Grand to witness an execution—he won 11 of 12 rounds on all three judges' scorecards—that was a foregone conclusion. The intrigue didn't lay in the result, despite the fact that Castillejo was on a 14-fight win streak. It was whether or not De La Hoya would still be the king of pop with his fists as he moves up in weight to chase conqueror Felix Trinidad and West Coast rival Fernando Vargas.

De La Hoya teed off on Castillejo from the opening bell, and when the onslaught was over, he had connected on 403 of 749 total punches, according to CompuBox. His jab found a home 56 percent of the time, and his powershots landed at a rate of 52 percent. Still, Castillejo looked little the worse for wear in the end. One is left to ponder what would have happened if Trini-

De La Hoya looks weary as one of his handlers lifts him up at the conclusion of the bout. Afterward, the new WBC 154-pound champion said that he felt strong, but that "something was missing."

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

dad had found Castillejo so easily and often. Would the Spaniard have remained conscious? What if Vargas could get his mitts on such an easy mark? Would the defending champ be able to sustain the pain that would surely follow? After all, this is the same Castillejo who was stopped by Laurent Boudouani. True to form, De La Hoya left more questions than he gave answers as we assess his viability and effectiveness at higher weights.

The power shortage that has swept California also appears to have zapped the fists of De La Hoya, who was a brutal puncher in the lightweight classes, but has had to rely on volume to achieve the same result at 140 and 147 pounds. He's still a sharp puncher, but there's a possibility that the only lights that'll be turning out at the 154-pound class for De La Hoya might be his own.

"It's a matter of sitting on your punches, being smart, chopping more wood, and landing your punches right," said De La Hoya, 34-2 (27), of achieving knockouts and his new old-school regimen under Floyd Mayweather Sr., who was working his corner for the second time.

To find fault with De La Hoya's performance may seen unfair, because he pretty much dominated a workmanlike veteran who actually earned the belt he held. But there's no denying that De La Hoya lacked the exclamation point needed to make him feared as well as revered again, though he did finally put Castillejo down with a hard right in the closing moments of the 12th.

De La Hoya's right hand, once so scarce it was thought he was preserving it for science, was a consistent force. Shortly after the first bell, he jarred Castillejo, 51-5 (34), with a stiff one to the forehead that produced an abrasion. In the fifth, Castillejo thought he struck gold when a right uppercut and left hook rocked De La Hoya, but he was met with a brisk right hand in return at round's end. Again, in the seventh and eighth, Castillejo pressed the issue and tried to impose his will on his tiring opponent, but De La Hoya nailed him with a series of thudding rights that gave his foe a bloody nose.

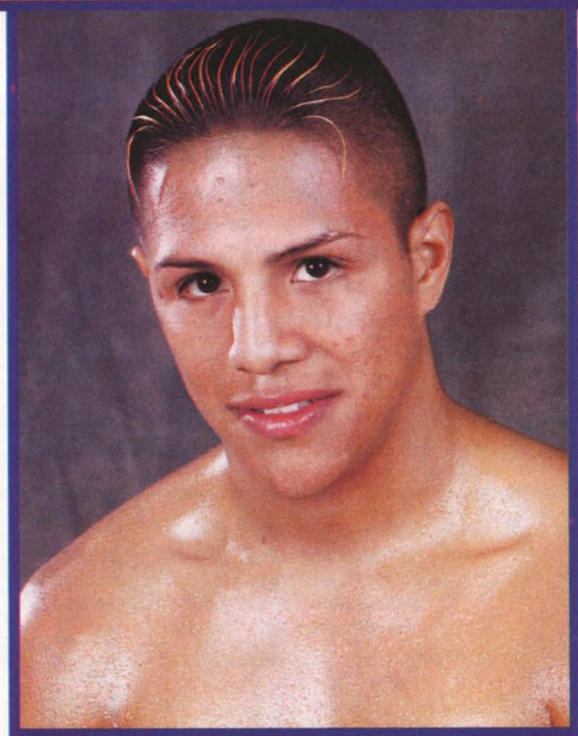
Yes, the man from Madrid had his moments, but they were sporadic. While he showed the heart of a champion and earned every bit of his career-high $800,000 purse, he certainly didn't possess the kind of talent needed to defeat De La Hoya. Before the fight, Castillejo was delusional enough to say, with a straight face, that he had faced better competition than De La Hoya, somehow believing Javier Martinez, Paolo Roberto, Mikael Rask, and Tony Marshall added up to Pernell Whitaker, Ike Quartey, Shane Mosley, and Trinidad. Castillejo also proclaimed to be faster than ever, but his 18-percent connect rate in overall punching suggested that if he were any slower, he might have been declared legally dead by the ringside physician.

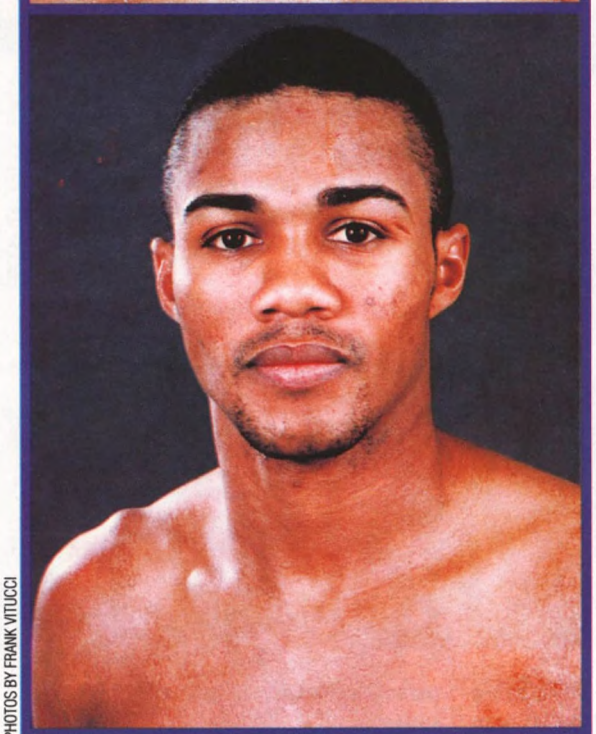
So De La Hoya took care of business, which is the most important thing when you get right down to it. But it's outside of the ring where he needs a makeover if he wants to recapture boxing fans rather than the boy band brigade.

He was a few hours late for the postfight conference after his fight with Arturo Gatti in March, and was roundly criticized for that

De La Hoya flashed his famous smile at the postfight press conference. Although he answered all the tough questions, De La Hoya made contradictory statements about whether or not he'll continue to campaign at 154 pounds.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA





PHOTOS BY FRANK VITUCCI

The question remains whether or not De La Hoya's punching power will be sufficient to beat 154-pound rival Fernando Vargas (top) and 160-pound dreadnought Felix Trinidad.

as another sign of his growing arrogance, but this time he was prompt and showed the personality that had made him boxing's sweetheart.

"My hair stylist wasn't here, so I took less time," he said to the bemusement of many.

Then he cracked one of his million-dollar smiles, immediately putting the room at ease. De La Hoya can be gentlemanly and likable and carry himself with grace. He doesn't need an interpreter to handle inquiries from the Spanish-speaking press, and he answered every question, even the critical ones, with the tact that his abrasive trainer often lacks.

So what's wrong with that? What's wrong with De La Hoya having aspirations in life that exceed boxing, such as being an architect or a singer? What's wrong with him being a mama's boy? It's a lot better than being a crass, foul-mouthed, anti-social bully, isn't it?

Here's the problem: De La Hoya carries the reputation of a phony who is about as genuine as one of his marriage proposals, and many are turned off by his image-conscious approach. There were several indications during the Castillejo fight that his core fan base—young, loyal, and female—treat his bouts more like a concert than a fight. They lack the same passion that beloved Mexican warriors such as Marco Antonio Barrera or Erik Morales generate. Barrera and Morales do it by punching the opponent in the mouth. De La Hoya does it by merely taking off his robe. True, his fans' money spends the same, but the way he's going, De La Hoya may never waltz back into the hearts of true-grit fight fans. And the teeny boppers' loyalty could easily fade with another loss, or the minute Father Time works his evil magic on his dainty visage.

How synthetic was the production of the Castillejo fight? Well, De La Hoya entered the ring to a Mariachi band that would've been more convincing if they had played the air guitar to accompany their lip synching. And in the ninth round, when the going got rough after Castillejo rocked De La Hoya with a left hook-right hand combination, a weak chant of "Me-hee-co" from about 10 people among a crowd of 12,000-plus lasted about five seconds.

(The only other person who appeared to be more conflicted than De La Hoya was Castillejo's promoter, Murad Muhammad, who kept calling this fight "The Request" instead of "The Quest." Nor did Muhammad know how to pronounce the name of the fighter who he claimed to be so close to. Is it Castillego or Castillecko? Or maybe it's Castillo?)

De La Hoya needs to make up his mind about who he wants to be. When asked if winning his latest title meant anything because what Castillejo did was tantamount to selling him the opportunity, De La Hoya responded sternly: "If it's easy, why doesn't every fighter do it then?"

But it's not about giving the "right" answers. There aren't any when you get down to it. It's a matter of The Golden Boy standing firmly behind his statements and beliefs and not blinking the minute his veracity comes into question. He should come right out and say that he thinks he beat Trinidad. Admit that he lost fair and square to Mosley, but if given another chance would knock him into next week and prove he's a one-fight wonder. He shouldn't run from Vargas' challenge, but call him out as the punk he thinks he is. He should grow a five-o'clock shadow and even sneer if he wants. Whatever the case, De La Hoya should simply be himself.

"In the past, I was complaining too much, not training, and making excuses," De La Hoya admitted. "Now I'm hungry and ready to prove to the world I'm the best. I have to fight who's in front of me.

"I probably wouldn't be as comfortable [at 160] as Trinidad is. For me to move up, it's a big chance, but I'm willing to do it. I can assure you one thing: I have the potion to do it."

If he can do that, every knee would kneel and every head would bow. For he would be the king of kings again. ■

Johnnie Whitehead is an editor for USA Today and a regular contributor to this magazine.

RANKING THE BEST FIGHTERS IN THE WORLD

Compiled by the Editors

Welcome to "The Ring 100," formerly known as the "*KO* 100." After a highly successful five-year run in The Ring's sister publication, our annual ranking of the top 100 fighters in the world has been moved because there's much more room in the 108-page Ring Extra. But regardless of which London Publishing boxing magazine it appears in, readers can count on the most comprehensive rating of fighters available anywhere.

Those unfamiliar with this yearly evaluation of boxing's finest should think of it as an extension of the pound-for-pound rankings found in every issue. In other words, even though Marco Antonio Barrera wouldn't have a chance of beating Hasim Rahman in the ring, the Mexican featherweight is ranked above the heavyweight champion in "The Ring 100." This mythical pound-for-pound arena, where all fighters of all sizes are compared and contrasted against one another as if they all fought in the same division, has become increasingly significant due to the proliferation of weight classes and so-called champions. In a confusing world where it often seems that practically every fighter wears some sort of alphabet belt or another, inclusion in "The Ring 100" is a reliable indicator of excellence.

Selecting the 100 boxers to be included and then arranging them in numerical order is always a daunting task. Not only are there ambiguities and differences of opinion to deal with, but the results of bouts that take place between the time the original list is compiled and the printing press rolls necessitates constant adjustments. But all the work and aggravation is well worth it, and what you are about to read is much more than just a list of outstanding fighters. It's also a thumbnail sketch of their careers to date and a forecast of what lies ahead for them in the future.

"The Ring 100" is also a pertinent indicator of boxing's constant state of flux. Of the 100 fighters who comprise this year's rankings, 33 are newcomers, which, of course, also means that 33 from last year's list have fallen by the wayside for various reasons.

All rankings are based on ability and accomplishments, with only results of fights that took place prior to our July 8 deadline being taken into consideration. As always, we expect disagreement and welcome feedback. We're confident, however, that what you are about to read on the next 20 pages is an equitable appraisal of the very best the Sweet Science has to offer.

1 SHANE MOSLEY
WBC Welterweight Champion 37-0 (34)

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Last Year's Ranking: 5
Status Report: Zoomed to the number-one spot on the strength of his masterful 12-round decision over Oscar De La Hoya in June 2000 to capture the WBC 147-pound belt. Subsequent defenses over Antonio Diaz (KO 6) and Shannan Taylor (KO 5) confirmed that Sugar Shane is the complete package.
Future: Should have banked another successful defense (against Adrian Stone) by time you read this. Lack of marquee opponents at welter may force move up in weight.

Mosley punishes De La Hoya to take top pound-for-pound spot

2 FELIX TRINIDAD
WBA Middleweight Champion 40-0 (33)

Last Year's Ranking: 2
Status Report: Sensational wins over Fernando Vargas (KO 12) and William Joppy (KO 5) have cemented standing as the greatest Puerto Rican fighter ever. At age 28, awesome-punching three-division champion is in his absolute prime, and has never been more popular.
Future: A solid favorite going into September 15 bout with Bernard Hopkins for undisputed middleweight title, and if successful, the plan is to fight Roy Jones at a catchweight, then retire.

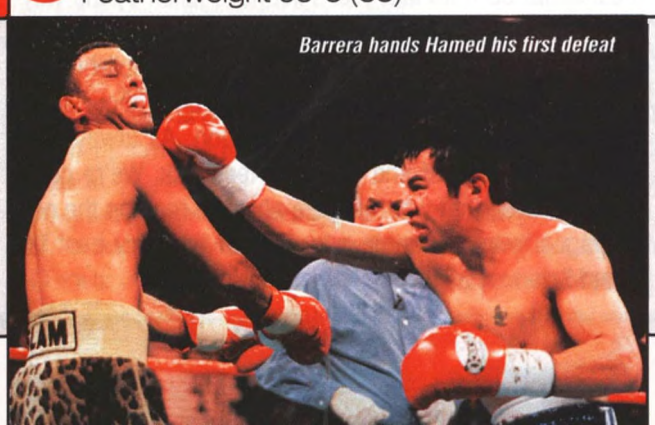
3 FLOYD MAYWEATHER
WBC Super Featherweight Champion 26-0 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: 4
Status Report: Looked vulnerable in non-title bout with Emanuel Burton (KO 9) after ending seven-month layoff, but then turned in career-best performance against dangerous Diego Corrales (KO 10). Outpointed Carlos Hernandez to tally seventh defense, despite entering bout with two injured hands.
Future: Brilliant talent will need two healthy hands to get past tough Jesus Chavez in October defense. Superfight with Joel Casamayor-Acelino Freitas winner is possible, as is move up to 135. Consistency is key to advancement.

4 ROY JONES
WBA/WBC/IBF Light Heavyweight Champion 44-1 (36)

Last Year's Ranking: 1
Status Report: Substantial pound-for-pound dropoff can be attributed to three factors: unimpressive showing vs. Eric Harding last September, continued hand-picking of underqualified opposition, and sensational superfight victories by rivals Mosley, Trinidad, and Mayweather.
Future: Can rejuvenate career by defeating winner of middleweight unification tournament, but already showing his reluctance by making demands that Trinidad, if victorious, must fight him by next January. One gets the feeling that the light heavy champ, for all his talents, is content to retire untested.

5 MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
Featherweight 53-3 (38)



Barrera hands Hamed his first defeat

Last Year's Ranking: 12
Status Report: Most popular Mexican fighter since Julio Cesar Chavez hit the skids. Displayed multidimensional capabilities in upset win over Naseem Hamed (W 12) to verify status as world's best featherweight. Proved he has much more going for him than just a ferocious left hook to the liver.
Future: Start salivating now! Rematch with Erik Morales—2000's Fight of the Year—is in the works for December. Another lucrative bout with Naz also likely.

6 OSCAR DE LA HOYA
WBC Super Welterweight Champion 34-2 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: 3
Status Report: Talk about an eventful year: Lost to Shane Mosley (L 12) in an outstanding fight, released a CD and earned a Grammy nomination, broke from promoter Bob Arum, replaced longtime trainer Robert Alcazar with Floyd Mayweather Sr., returned from a nine-month layoff by beating Arturo Gatti (KO 5), and became a four-division titlist by dominating Francisco Castillejo (W 12) for the WBC 154-pound belt.
Future: Wants to avenge losses to Mosley and Felix Trinidad or take on Fernando Vargas, but will have to back down from his "on my terms" nonsense for those fights to come to fruition.

7 BERNARD HOPKINS
IBF/WBC Middleweight Champion 39-2-1 (28) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 8
Status Report: Repeat win over Antwun Echols (KO 10) and comprehensive 12-round decision over Keith Holmes to capture WBC belt have "The Executioner" riding higher than ever before in 12-year pro career. Long reign (13 defenses) and outspoken personality have helped raise Q-rating.
Future: Is big underdog in September 15 unification showdown with Felix Trinidad, but will garner career-high purse regardless of outcome. Rematch with Roy Jones plausible if he gets past Trinidad.

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Hopkins hammers Holmes to take WBC crown

8 NASEEM HAMED
Featherweight 35-1 (31)

Last Year's Ranking: 10
Status Report: Climbed in ratings because of inactivity of the likes of Mark Johnson and Ricardo Lopez, but still fell in stature with one-sided loss to Marco Antonio Barrera in April. Even before that, looked ready to be taken in bruising win over Augie Sanchez.
Future: Question marks abound: Will he be the same, in terms of both personality and performance, without his unbeaten record? Who will replace Emanuel Steward in his corner? Passed on immediate rematch with Barrera, but may fight Johnny Tapia in the fall, which should provide some answers.

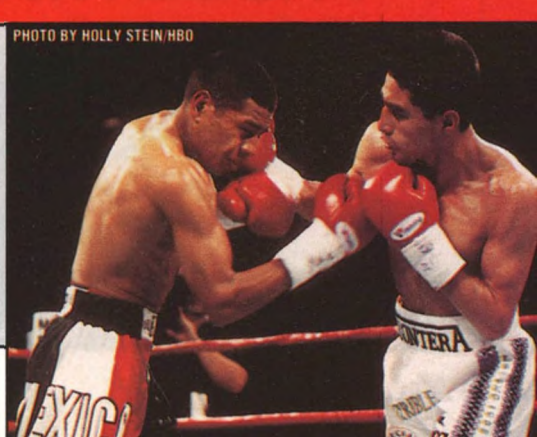
9 RICARDO LOPEZ
IBF Junior Flyweight Champion 49-0-1 (36)

Last Year's Ranking: 7
Status Report: Still one of the most complete craftsmen in the game, but has had only one fight since last year's ratings, a third-round knockout of Ratanapol Vorapin in December 2000, as injuries and age (34) have slowed itinerary.
Future: Was slated to face used-up Saman Sorjaturong on Don King's August card in China, but the IBF may mandate that he face Zolani Petelo first. A third fight with WBA boss Rosendo Alvarez would be an attraction, as would a move up to challenge WBA flyweight titlist Eric Morel.

10 ERIK MORALES
WBC Featherweight Champion 40-0 (31)

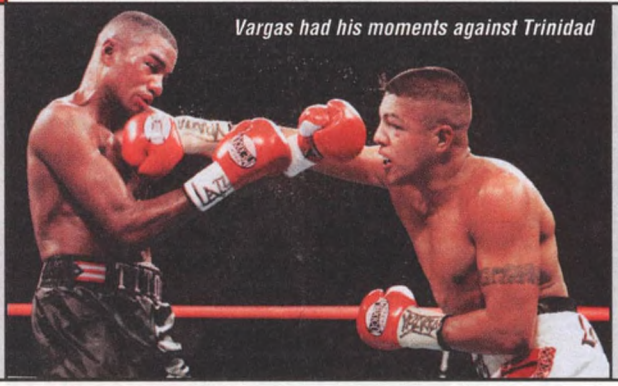
Last Year's Ranking: 13
Status Report: Looked strong in first three bouts as a featherweight, against Mike Juarez (KO 3), Kevin Kelley (KO 7), and Rodney Jones (KO 1), but was sluggish and tentative in eking out controversial decision over Guty Espadas for the WBC belt. Though still technically undefeated, run of suspect decisions has cost him the "new Chavez" tag.
Future: Mandatory defense vs. In Jin Chi was pending as of press time. Provided "El Terrible" prevails there, a can't-miss rematch with Marco Antonio Barrera is on tap.

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO



Morales finds Espadas' head with a right

11 FERNANDO VARGAS
Junior Middleweight 21-1 (19)


Vargas had his moments against Trinidad

Last Year's Ranking: 11
Status Report: Made a magnificent effort, but was brutally hammered by Felix Trinidad (KO by 12), losing IBF 154-pound title in the process. Won comeback fight against respected Wilfredo Rivera (KO 6), but had to come off the floor to do so, increasing speculation that Trinidad loss took a lot out of him.
Future: Will face Shibata Flores for the WBA title, which was left vacant when Trinidad moved up to middleweight. Now that he's proved mortal, might get a grudge match with Oscar De La Hoya, who is now campaigning as a junior middle.

12 TIM AUSTIN
IBF Bantamweight Champion 23-0-1 (21)

Last Year's Ranking: 16
Status Report: Talented Cincinnati southpaw is finally getting a push, but at age 30, it may be too late to make a star of him. Topped the Ruiz-Holyfield II undercard in March by beating Jesus Perez (KO 6), and headlined his first HBO show with a win over Steve Dotse (KO 6) in June.
Future: There are plenty of appealing matchups in the deep bantamweight class, and as we went to press, promoter Don King was reportedly pursuing a unification bout with WBC champ Veerapol Sahaprom. If that can't be made, a battle with comebacking Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson would be ideal.

13 KOSTYA TSZYU
WBA/WBC Super Lightweight Champion 27-1-1 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 20
Status Report: Retired Julio Cesar Chavez (KO 6) and then added the WBA 140-pound title to the WBC version he already held by stopping Sharmba Mitchell (KO 7) in a rough-and-tumble affair that underlined both his difficulty with movers and his ruthlessness in overcoming it. Defense against Oktay Urkal (W 12) in June was much tougher than expected.
Future: Set to unify the title against Zab Judah in November, a fight for which he'll have to be better than he was against Mitchell or Urkal.

14 ZAB JUDAH
IBF Junior Welterweight Champion 27-0 (21) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 19
Status Report: Speedy Brooklyn southpaw continues to show flashes of brilliance, but, due to a string of spotty title defenses, hasn't rocketed up the ratings as expected. Off-the-floor, fourth-round kayo of Terronn Millett was sensational, but wins over Junior Witter (W 12), Hector Quiroz (KO 8), and Reggie Green (KO 10) left much to be desired.
Future: Favored to beat Kostya Tszyu in November for the undisputed title. A win there could set up a superfight with Shane Mosley.

15 PAULIE AYALA
WBA Bantamweight Champion 32-1 (12)

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Last Year's Ranking: 17
Status Report: The judges certainly like him. Last two title defenses both ended in controversial decision wins, as Johnny Tapia rematch left Showtime crew fuming, and Hugo Dianzo fight had ESPN2's Teddy Atlas in an uproar. Nevertheless, the popular Texan is a versatile boxer-brawler, and nobody else has had the success against Tapia that he has.
Future: If successful on August 4 against Bones Adams, could be in the big-money Barrera-Morales-Hamed mix. If not, still a top commodity in the lower weight classes.

Never a dull moment with Tapia and Ayala

16 VEERAPOL SAHAPROM
WBC Bantamweight Champion 31-1 (23)

Last Year's Ranking: 23
Status Report: Three more successful defenses—Toshiaki Nishioka (W 12), Oscar Arciniega (KO 5), and Ricardo Barajas (KO 3)—since last year's rankings have elevated him seven spots. Although he's only fought twice outside of Asia, the hard-hitting Thai is good enough to compete with the best American and Latino bantams. Don't forget he won the WBA 118-pound title in only his fourth pro fight.
Future: At press time, negotiations were ongoing for a unification bout against IBF titlist Tim Austin.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Sahaprom (right) attacks Barajas

17 JOHNNY TAPIA
Featherweight 50-2-2 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: 18
Status Report: Rematch with arch rival Paulie Ayala (L 12) was even closer than their first fight, and once again the loser thought he was robbed. Rebounded with a hard-fought sixth-round TKO of perennial contender Cuauhtemoc Gomez. Then, after signing on with Don King again, he impressively became the first man to kayo veteran Cesar Soto, stopping him with bodyshots in the third.
Future: Wants a big-money fight with Naseem Hamed, and an October date is being discussed.

18 DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI
Light Heavyweight 44-0 (34)

Last Year's Ranking: 21
Status Report: Consensus number-two light heavy has continued to feast on mediocre opposition and pad his glossy resume while trying to convince Roy Jones to fight him. Recent wins over nobodies Ka-Dy King (KO 7) and Alejandro Lakatus (KO 9) don't exactly help his cause, nor does his own refusal to fight Jones in America.
Future: Can make good money fighting stiffs on his home turf, so don't expect him to cave to Jones' demands. Likewise for "Reluctant Roy." It's a shame, because German-based Pole needs Jones to establish any sort of legacy.

19 JOSE LUIS CASTILLO
WBC Lightweight Champion 43-4-1 (39)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Burst onto the world stage in June '00 by upsetting pound-for-pound entrant Steve Johnston (W 12) to capture the title. Retained via draw in rematch, then handed former champ Cesar Bazan (KO 6) the worst beating of his career. Tallied his third defense with a first-round knockout of Korean Sungho Yuh in June '01.
Future: As Johnston is his mandatory, a third meeting is likely. A superfight with current 130-pound king Floyd Mayweather is also a strong possibility if the Mexican still holds the 135-pound belt when "Pretty Boy" is ready to move up.

20 HASIM RAHMAN
WBC/IBF Heavyweight Champion 35-2 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Became boxing's first great Cinderella story of the new millennium when he leveled 20-1 favorite Lennox Lewis with one ferocious right hand to claim the world heavyweight title. Pulled off another huge upset three weeks later when he broke from promoter Cedric Kushner and signed a contract with Don King.
Future: Court ruling requires that "The Rock" make his first defense against Lewis, or else sit idle for 18 months. A fall date for that rematch was being negotiated as we went to press.

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Rahman has Jesse Ferguson ducking for cover

21 LENNOX LEWIS
Heavyweight 38-2-1 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 14
Status Report: Shockingly easy decision over David Tua, combined with everything he'd accomplished the previous year, had appeased virtually all the critics. Then along came Hasim Rahman (KO by 5), who ruined everything with a single right hand to the chin that put the Englishman on his back and into a position similar to the one that followed his kayo loss to Oliver McCall in '94.
Future: Won court case and will get the first crack at Rahman. Expect the ex-champ to be better prepared this time.

All Lewis needed to beat Tua was his jab

22 WINKY WRIGHT
Junior Middleweight 41-3 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 33
Status Report: Followed up close decision defeat to Fernando Vargas by cementing his standing as one of the elite at 154 pounds with dominant decision wins over respected Bronco McKart and Keith Mullings. Florida southpaw will turn 30 in November, but doesn't appear to be slowing down at all.
Future: Almost a lock to finally become a world champ when he faces Robert Frazier for vacant IBF title. That belt could help him get a major fight with Vargas, Oscar De La Hoya, or Shane Mosley.

23 STEVE JOHNSTON
Lightweight 32-2-1 (15)

Last Year's Ranking: 9
Status Report: Like almost everybody else, didn't discover just how good unheralded Jose Luis Castillo was until he lost the WBC lightweight title to him in June '00. Thought he'd done enough to regain the title three months later, but had to settle for a draw. Although tough fights and cuts have slowed him a bit, the Denver native is still one of the game's best pure boxers. Has won two comeback fights since second encounter with Castillo.
Future: He's Castillo's mandatory and should get a third crack at him before the year is over.

24 MARK JOHNSON
Bantamweight 39-1 (26) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 6
Status Report: Former flyweight and junior bantamweight champ returned from 19-month layoff by decisioning tough journeyman Sergio Perez in June, though he was badly rocked by Perez in the seventh round. Clearly in decline at age 29, but still exceptionally quick and skilled, and probably capable of becoming a three-division titlist.
Future: After years spent fruitlessly chasing after big-money fights, attractive opponents may finally be willing to face this more vulnerable version of "Too Sharp."

25 JOEL CASAMAYOR
WBA Super Featherweight Champion 25-0 (15)

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Last Year's Ranking: 54
Status Report: Cuban political refugee solidified position as one of the world's finest 130-pounders with defenses over Radford Beasley (KO 5), Roberto Garcia (KO 9), and Edwin Santana (W 12). Stylish southpaw is quick, slick, and as he proved against Garcia, can overcome a rocky start.
Future: Should have fought Brazilian knockout artist Acelino Freitas by the time you read this. A victory could lead to a high-profile fight with WBC titlist Floyd Mayweather.

Casamayor has Beasley under fire

26 ACELINO FREITAS
Junior Lightweight 29-0 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 58
Status Report: Awesome-hitting Brazilian let America know the hype was for real with televised wins last year over Lemuel Nelson (KO 2), Carlos Rios (KO 9), and Daniel Alicea (KO 1). On the downside, however, "Popo" gets knocked down frequently and is killing himself to make 130 pounds.
Future: Win or lose in pending showdown with WBA super featherweight champ Joel Casamayor, he's headed for the lightweight division. And with his exciting, high-risk style, he should blossom into a top TV attraction for years to come.

27 GUTY ESPADAS
Featherweight 34-3 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 55
Status Report: Even though he only managed a single title defense (W 12 Wethya Sakmuangklang) prior to losing the WBC 126-pound belt to Erik Morales, his spunky title-losing performance and the controversial nature of the decision brought the underestimated son of former WBA flyweight champion Guty Espadas Sr. more esteem than all of his wins put together.
Future: Still a player in the talent-rich 126-pound division, and should work his way back to another title shot soon.

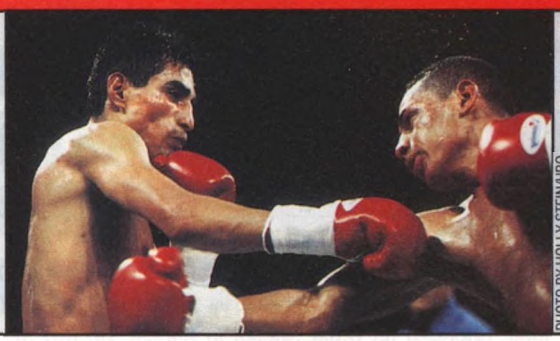


PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

Espadas (right) won fans losing to Morales

28 MANNY PACQUIAO
IBF Junior Featherweight Champion 33-2 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Former WBC flyweight champ, who lost the title in part because of weight-making difficulties, is an all-out terror 10 pounds north. Aggressive Filipino southpaw blew out Lehlo Ledwaba (KO 6) for the IBF 122-pound belt in June, making him 7-0 (7) at the new weight. Trained by L.A.-based Freddie Roach.
Future: Suddenly a major player in the talent-rich featherweight and junior feather divisions. A logical opponent for the Paulie Ayala-Bones Adams winner.

29 YOSAM CHOI
WBC Light Flyweight Champion 23-1 (12)

Last Year's Ranking: 34
Status Report: Seems to have added punching power to his already outstanding defensive skills since winning title, stopping Chart Kiatpetch in five and Saman Sorjaturong in seven in his only two defenses to date.
Future: Mandatory challenger Jorge Arce is young, strong, and improved since losing to Michael Carbajal in '99. But Choi should be the favorite, especially if they fight in Korea.

30 ROSENDO ALVAREZ
WBA Junior Flyweight Champion 29-2-1 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: 27
Status Report: Former WBA 105-pound champ failed in August '00 bid to win vacant 108-pound title when he was disqualified for low blows against Bebis Mendoza, but bounced back in March '01 rematch with split decision win. Not quite the force he was at strawweight, but with his personal problems reportedly under control, certainly among the best at junior fly.
Future: August 4 clash with former titleholder Pichit C. Siriwat could go either way. A third fight with Ricardo Lopez, for big money fight by little-guy standards, remains a possibility.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Alvarez lands a hook to Mendoza's belt line

31 CHANA PORPAOIN
WBA Minimumweight Champion 44-1-2 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 96
Status Report: Regained WBA 105-pound belt by beating Keitaro Hoshino (W 12) in April '01. He'd originally held the title from February '93 until December '95, making eight successful defenses before losing the crown in his lone career loss, a 12-round decision to Rosendo Alvarez, who has since moved up to 108-pound class.
Future: Is somewhat of a dinosaur among little men at age 35, but could conceivably hold the title a while longer thanks to his ring savvy and busy style.

WBA 105-pound champ Porpaoin

32 JOE CALZAGHE
Super Middleweight 31-0 (26)

Last Year's Ranking: 81
Status Report: Gave sagging reputation an enormous boost with three straight exciting knockout victories since last year's rankings. Chopped up Omar Sheika in August '00 (KO 5), downed former WBC champ Richie Woodhall in December (KO 10), and squashed previously unbeaten Mario Veit (KO 1) this past April.
Future: With big names like Roy Jones and Felix Trinidad possibly headed to super middleweight, Welshman has an outside chance at a huge payday. But a proposed fight with heavy-hitter Antwun Echols has the potential to ruin his plans.

33 ERIC MOREL
WBA Flyweight Champion 30-0 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 82
Status Report: Classy boxer earned excellent reviews beating Sornpichai Pisnurachank (W 12) for the WBA 112-pound title, but failed to thrill in his first two defenses, pedestrian decisions over Alberto Ontiveros and Gilberto Keb-Baas. Regained a measure of his original appeal with free-swinging TKO of mandatory challenger Jose DeJesus Lopez in his third defense.
Future: Promoter Top Rank has told Morel he may have to fight above the flyweight limit to obtain a marquee match.

34 PICHIT C. SIRIWAT
Junior Flyweight 23-1 (12)

Last Year's Ranking: 30
Status Report: Four-year reign as WBA 108-pound champion ended last summer when he was stripped for pulling out of a defense against mandatory challenger Rosendo Alvarez. Speedy Thailander has taken just one fight since, a 10-round decision win over trialhorse Bong Arlos. Only loss came seven years ago, when he was just 19 years old challenging a prime Leo Gamez.
Future: Assuming nobody pulls out, will have finally fought Alvarez for his former title by the time you read this.

35 BONES ADAMS
Super Bantamweight 41-3-3 (19)

PHOTO BY SCOTT ROMER

Last Year's Ranking: 48
Status Report: Young veteran (27) has fought only twice since last year's rankings due to a hand injury, successfully defending against Andres Fernandez (KO 6) and Ivan Alvarez (W 12).
Future: The WBA stripped him of its recognition in early July. The alphabet organization demanded he defend against Yober Ortega next, but Adams decided to go ahead with a more lucrative match against Paulie Ayala in early-August instead.

Adams keeps Alvarez at bay with a left

36 ANDREW LEWIS
WBA Welterweight Champion 21-0-1 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Looked like a potential threat to Shane Mosley when he came from out of nowhere to whip James Page for the vacant WBA title in February, but followed that up with a pedestrian points win over Larry Marks in his first defense. "Six Heads" has an excellent combination of speed and power, but he's no Mosley.
Future: In the Mosley mix, though Vernon Forrest seems to have the inside track on getting the shot at Sugar Shane first. One possibility is that the charismatic Guyanan fights Forrest, with the winner to get Mosley.

37 VERNON FORREST
IBF Welterweight Champion 32-0 (25) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 37
Status Report: It took the smooth boxing 1992 Olympian two attempts, but he finally won the vacant IBF 147-pound crown with a lopsided 12-round decision over Raul Frank in May '01. Their first bout ended in a third-round no-contest when an accidental headbutt cut Frank so badly, he couldn't continue.
Future: IBF's number-one spot currently vacant. Possible unification with either WBA champion Andrew Lewis or WBC boss Shane Mosley.

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Forrest shakes off a left from Frank

38 WILLIAM JOPPY
Middleweight 32-2-1 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 29
Status Report: Learned on May 12 that there's a big difference between fighting a 47-year-old Roberto Duran and fighting a prime Felix Trinidad. Though stylish, versatile, and physically strong, Joppy was no match for Tito, and his second WBA title reign ended via brutal fifth-round knockout.
Future: Whether he can bounce back from Trinidad beating is anyone's guess. Recovery process will begin with precarious matchup against D.C.-area rival Keith Holmes on September 15 Trinidad-Hopkins undercard.

39 ADAN VARGAS
Bantamweight 36-2-1 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Since dropping decision to WBC bantam boss Veerapol Sahaprom in March '00, the highly competent Mexican southpaw rebounded well with solid wins over top opposition in Mauricio Pastrana (W 12), Ivan Alvarez (W 12), and Jorge Eliecer Julio (W 12).
Future: Providing he keeps winning, high ranking by all three major alphabet organizations should earn him another title shot soon.

Vargas outpoints Max Gomez

40 SVEN OTTKE
IBF Super Middleweight Champion 23-0 (4)

Last Year's Ranking: 38
Status Report: Riding an almost unfathomable two-fight knockout streak! German cutie somehow turned back both James Crawford and Ali Ennebati inside the distance, in the process extending to a division-record 10 successful title defenses.
Future: Based on the way he's struggled when facing worthy opposition (two disputed decisions over Charles Brewer and a highly controversial technical decision over Thomas Tate), September 1 defense against left-hook artist James Butler should be a toughie.

41 JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ
WBC Cruiserweight Champion 32-0 (27)

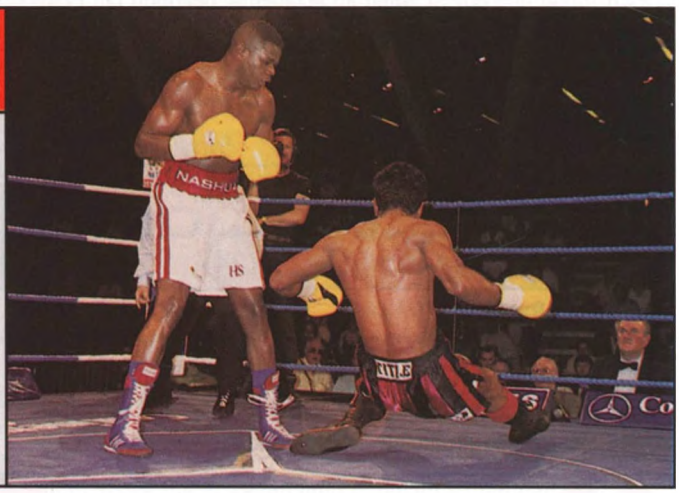
Last Year's Ranking: 41
Status Report: Germany-based Cuban didn't help himself by fighting only once (KO 10 Jorge Castro) since last year's rankings. Fled to the U.S. to avoid tax problems in Germany, but returned without fighting here. Has tallied nine successful defenses since winning 190-pound belt in February '98, which is division record.
Future: Has spoken of desire to move up to heavyweight, but a few more cruiser defenses are likely first.

42 SHARMBA MITCHELL
Junior Welterweight 47-3 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 35
Status Report: Was it worth it for $900,000? Raked in a career-best payday against Kostya Tszyu in February, but tore his left ACL midway through the fight and surrendered the WBA title by quitting on his stool after the seventh round. Until the injury slowed him down, veteran southpaw was holding his own.
Future: Almost done recuperating from injury as we went to press, and expected to return to the ring sometime in the fall against a tuneup-type opponent.

43 HARRY SIMON
Middleweight 21-0 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 32
Status Report: Wild-swinging Namibian slugger had to overcome some shaky moments in his only two bouts since last year's rankings, but still managed to beat cutie Rodney Jones (W 12) and hard-hitting Wayne Alexander (KO 5) in defense of the low-rent WBO junior middleweight title.
Future: May have boxed Hungarian Andras Galfi for the vacant WBO middleweight title by the time you read this.



Simon sends Kevin Lueshing down

44 PAUL SPADAFORA
IBF Lightweight Champion 33-0 (14)

Last Year's Ranking: 44
Status Report: One-sided decision wins in title defenses against Billy Irwin and Joel Perez merely underscored "The Pittsburgh Kid's" ability to outbox plodding, limited fighters. His promoter, Mike Acri, seems to know how to draw big hometown crowds at minimal risk, but he's not helping his charge to grow as a fighter with such cautious matchmaking.
Future: Seems interested in a serious test against Angel Manfredy or Stevie Johnson, but is instead slated to face totally undeserving clubfighter Chucky T.

45 VASSILIY JIROV
IBF Cruiserweight Champion 28-0 (26)

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Last Year's Ranking: 61
Status Report: Bodypunching specialist has continued to feast on ridiculously easy opposition–Earl Butler (KO 2), Alex Gonzalez (KO 1), and Terry McGroom (KO 1). Recently pulled out of significant bout with James Toney and dropped longtime promoter Top Rank.
Future: Has signed with British promotional company Panix, who are working on putting back together the fight with Toney, possibly as a low-level pay-per-view in the late-summer.

Jirov dooms McGroom in one

46 MASAMORI TOKUYAMA
WBC Super Flyweight Champion 24-2-1 (6)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: The first North Korean world champ ever (though he resides in Japan), he upset previously unbeaten In Joo Cho (W 12) for the title last August, scored a successful defense against well-regarded Akihiko Nago (W 12), and then knocked Cho unconscious in the fifth round of their rematch. Apparently, his power's not quite as shabby as his knockout percentage indicates.
Future: Mandatory defense in September against ex-titlist Gerry Penalosa is a tossup on paper.

47 BEBIS MENDOZA
Junior Flyweight 26-1 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Won WBA 108-pound title with a seventh-round disqualification over Rosendo Alvarez in August '00, but lost it back via narrow decision in March '01 for his lone defeat. Well-rounded pro represented his native Colombia in '96 Olympics. Twenty-two of his 27 bouts have been in Colombia.
Future: Still high in the WBA ratings, but probably needs a couple of good wins to get rubber match with Alvarez.

48 ANGEL MANFREDY
Lightweight 37-5-1 (29) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 22
Status Report: Though only 26, seems well on the downside after absorbing one-sided shellacking from Diego Corrales (KO by 3) last September. But when at his best, the former "El Diablo" was a truly excellent all-around fighter, and his bodypunching, experience, and conditioning still make him a tough assignment for anyone in the division.
Future: Ventured to Pittsburgh for Paul Spadafora's last fight to call out the IBF champion, but even if that fight doesn't come together, the TV-friendly veteran shouldn't have to wait too long for another big fight.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Manfredy was too much for Sean Fletcher

49 HAWK MAKEPULA
Flyweight 18-1 (12)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: South African Olympian suffered first pro loss in November '00, dropping a controversial 12-round majority decision to IBF 112-pound titlist Irene Pacheco. Holds win over S.A. favorite Baby Jake Matlala.
Future: Rematch with Pacheco has been talked about ever since the decision was announced after the first fight, but no date has been set, and neither have fought since.

50 IRENE PACHECO
IBF Flyweight Champion 25-0 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: 52
Status Report: Didn't have a very busy year, making just one title defense, a highly controversial decision win over Hawk Makepula. But the rangy Colombian's standing in the "100" held steady for two reasons: Makepula is a quality fighter, and "Mambaco" finished the much stronger man in the fight, sweeping the last three rounds.
Future: Rematch with Makepula was supposedly in the works, but it still hasn't happened. Even so, with dangerous Fernando Montiel as the top-rated IBF contender, title reign may not last much longer.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Makepula and Pacheco still haven't fought a rematch

51 ERIC HARDING
Light Heavyweight 20-1-1 (6)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Lanky speedster earned crack at Roy Jones by beating previously undefeated Antonio Tarver (W 12), then surprised Jones by giving him an unexpectedly tough time before a biceps injury forced him to withdraw at the end of the 10th round. Also holds win over Montell Griffin, the only man to beat Jones in the pros.
Future: First comeback fight, a 10-round decision win over Demetrius Jenkins in June, suggested that he's fully recovered from the injury. Wants a rematch with Jones or a shot at Dariusz Michalczewski.

52 VIRGIL HILL
WBA Cruiserweight Champion 46-3 (22)

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Earned THE RING's 2000 Comeback of the Year award with his stunning first-round knockout of Fabrice Tiozzo for the WBA cruiser crown. Defied 15-1 odds and reputation as a light-hitting, washed-up fighter by sending Frenchman to the canvas three times in opening stanza.
Future: At age 37, the future is passing "Quicksilver" by. Should've cashed in with a high-profile title defense or unification bout, but instead has sat on the title since winning it last December. Mandatory challenger Jean Marc Mormeck doesn't look too threatening.

Hill shocks Tiozzo to take cruiser crown

53 ZOLANI PETELO
Junior Flyweight 17-2-2 (9)

Last Year's Ranking: 53
Status Report: Elegant boxer from South Africa relinquished IBF mini flyweight title after five successful defenses in order to fight at 108 pounds. With only four bouts in the past two years, inactivity has impeded advancement.
Future: Rated second for a shot at IBF junior fly king Ricardo Lopez. With the number-one spot vacant, he may get a crack at Lopez in the summer or fall.

54 MIKE TYSON
Heavyweight 48-3 (42) with 2 no-contests

Last Year's Ranking: 73
Status Report: In the ring, you can't complain about what the former heavyweight champ has done in the last year, blowing out usually tough Lou Savarese in 38 seconds, then forcing a surrender out of Andrew Golota after two rounds. But outside the ring—the post-Savarese tirade, the failed marijuana test, the inactivity—well, that's another story.
Future: As the WBC's mandatory and the division's biggest draw, he'll get his shot eventually, but in the meantime, he needs to get busy and shake off this latest layer of rust.

Golota can't handle Tyson's right

55 JESUS CHAVEZ
Junior Lightweight 35-1 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 90
Status Report: Back fighting in the U.S. now that immigration problems have been cleared up. Recently turned in most impressive performance in several years, pounding out unanimous 12-round decision over rugged Juan Arias. Lone loss was to Carlos Gerena, back in '95.
Future: Chance of a lifetime when he challenges WBC super featherweight titlist Floyd Mayweather in early-October.

56 WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Heavyweight 36-1 (33)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Mighty Ukrainian's breakout year was almost impressive enough to make us forget his wretched 1998 loss to Ross Puritty. Wins over Monte Barrett (KO 7), Chris Byrd (W 12), and Derrick Jefferson (KO 2) have the younger Klitschko brother positioned as arguably the most deserving contender to Hasim Rahman's title.
Future: Recently signed a three-fight contract with Top Rank. Unfortunately, WBO belt will keep him out of the other groups' ratings, and out of the title picture for the time being.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Klitschko's hook destroys Barrett

57 PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM
WBC Flyweight Champion 39-2 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Little-known veteran iced southpaw Malcolm Tunacao in the first round to win the WBC belt in March '01. It was the Thai's first shot at a world title. Hasn't lost since July '96, but has yet to fight outside of Asia.
Future: Ghana's Alex Baba is his mandatory challenger, but fairly unthreatening Hayato Asai gets the first crack, July 15, in Nagoya, Japan.

58 ENER JULIO
Junior Welterweight 21-3 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Blasted his way into the ratings by handing knockout artist Randall Bailey his first defeat in a thrilling slugfest last July on the Felix Trinidad-Mamadou Thiam undercard. After 11-month layoff, Colombian planned to return against Felix Flores in June, but had to withdraw when cataracts on both eyes were discovered.
Future: Will undergo surgery, then hoping to return by September. Guaranteed a shot at DeMarcus "Chop Chop" Corley (to whom he lost a split decision back in '99) upon his return.

59 RANDALL BAILEY
Junior Welterweight 24-1 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 36
Status Report: Back-and-forth war with little-known Ener Julio in July '00 ended in split decision loss for Miami puncher, ruining perfect record. But he's bounced back with three quickie knockout wins, regaining his confidence and reminding fans of his tremendous power.
Future: Rated third by the WBA and sixth by the IBF, and would certainly make for an attractive challenger for whoever prevails in the Zab Judah-Kostya Tszyu showdown. In the meantime, a fight against Diobelys Hurtado is being discussed.

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

Julio and Bailey stage a thriller

60 REGGIE JOHNSON
Light Heavyweight 42-6-1 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 64
Status Report: Former WBA middleweight and IBF light heavyweight champ rebounded well from lopsided points loss to Roy Jones with a trio of wins over Earl Butler (W 10), Chris Johnson (W 12), and Will Taylor (W 12) to stay high in the 175-pound rankings.
Future: Still very capable at age 35, but as long as Jones is on top of the division, another title is highly unlikely.

61 ANTONIO DIAZ
Junior Welterweight 35-3 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 46
Status Report: After hard-fought decision win over Micky Ward, jumped at the chance to make big money challenging Shane Mosley for the welterweight crown, and was squashed even worse than expected in six rounds. In his comeback fight, Coachella, California, slugger had to climb off the canvas to beat Gilbert Quiroz (KO 4), then tallied a win over Jorge Luis Lopez (KO 5).
Future: Will never beat the Mosleys or the Zab Judahs, but should remain a top contender and popular TV fighter for a few more years, until the wars catch up to him.

62 DERRICK GAINER
WBA Featherweight Champion 38-5 (24)

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Won portion of the 126-pound title with controversial 11th-round knockout of Freddie Norwood in September '00 foulfest. Norwood was being held by referee Paul Sita when final blows were delivered—a pair of uppercuts to the protective cup. Has made one defense, scoring a 12-round decision over Victor Polo in February '01.
Future: Was scheduled to defend against Juan Manuel Marquez on the July 28 pay-per-view card featuring good buddy Roy Jones vs. Julio Gonzalez in the main event, but Jones kicked him off the show after a falling out between them.

Gainer goes upside Polo's head

63 GERRY PENALOSA
Junior Bantamweight 43-3-2 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 59
Status Report: Former WBC champ has fought just twice in the past 12 months, but both bouts were impressive. Stopped world-class opponents Ratanachai Vorapin (KO 6) and Keiji Yamaguchi (KO 1) to work his way back to the mandatory position in the WBC's 115-pound ratings.
Future: Filipino veteran is slated to challenge Masamori Tokuyama for the title in September. Though Tokuyama twice defeated In Joo Cho, who twice defeated Penalosa, this one looks like it could go either way.

64 JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Featherweight 35-2 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: 79
Status Report: Has gradually worked his way back into contention after disappointing showing against then-WBA champion Freddie Norwood in September '99, tallying six straight wins since.
Future: When July title fight with WBA 126-pound boss Derrick Gainer fell apart due to no fault of his own, the Mexican was left in limbo. But number-two WBA ranking should eventually bring about title opportunity.

65 JOHN RUIZ
WBA Heavyweight Champion 37-4 (27)

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Once the subject of constant ridicule for his 19-second swoon against David Tua and his undeserved alphabet rankings, "The Quiet Man" silenced the critics with his two tremendous efforts against Evander Holyfield. Dropped a highly disputed decision to "The Real Deal" in their first fight, then won the rematch convincingly to become the first Latino heavyweight titlist.
Future: Everything depends on his August 4 rubber match with the faded Holyfield, which was still a few weeks away as we went to press.

Ruiz surprises Holyfield and the experts

66 SAMSON TOYOTA-THAILAND
Junior Bantamweight 40-0 (36)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Hard-hitting southpaw has compiled a remarkable record, but seems to have no ambition beyond the spurious WBF title that he's held since his fourth pro fight, in September '94. Has only had one pro fight outside of Thailand.
Future: More home cooking and knockouts.

67 FERNANDO MONTIEL
Flyweight 22-0-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Hard-hitting 22-year-old Mexican made a name for himself with seventh-round knockout of Isidro Garcia last December, then followed up with noteworthy wins over Zoltan Lunka (KO 7) and Juan Domingo Cordoba (KO 1). Is the younger brother of fellow flyweight contender Alejandro Montiel.
Future: As WBO titleholder, not likely to get a shot at one of the more prestigious belts. Mandatory challenger is Lebanon's Hussein Hussein, who also has a big punch and an undefeated record.

68 KEITH HOLMES
Middleweight 35-3 (23)

Last Year's Ranking: 39
Status Report: Turned in a passive performance losing WBC belt to Bernard Hopkins via 12-round decision in April '01. Rangy southpaw managed only four successful defenses in two reigns as WBC champ.
Future: Scheduled to fight former WBA titlist William Joppy in a consolation bout on the undercard of the middleweight championship unification finals between Hopkins and Felix Trinidad.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Holmes turns back the challenge of Andrew Council

69 FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO
Junior Middleweight 51-5 (34)

Last Year's Ranking: 71
Status Report: Surrendered WBC 154-pound title to Oscar De La Hoya (L 12) in June, showing himself to be tough and game, but also reinforcing the perception that he's several levels below the elite. Still, with five successful defenses, established himself as perhaps the greatest fighter ever from Spain.
Future: A popular attraction in his homeland, "El Lince" will probably return there to face weak opposition until another title opportunity comes along.

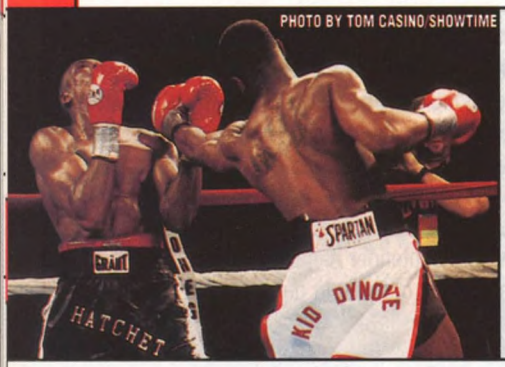
70 DAVID TUA
Heavyweight 38-2 (33)

Last Year's Ranking: 60
Status Report: Samoan slugger failed miserably in November '00 title challenge against Lennox Lewis, when he was totally outboxed over 12 monotonous rounds. Has tallied one comeback win since, stopping light-punching Danell Nicholson.
Future: Incomprehensibly regained the number-one spot in the IBF rankings, and has gone to court in an effort to force a fight with current IBF titlist Hasim Rahman. Even so, has agreed to fight Chris Byrd in an IBF elimination bout that will produce a mandatory challenger.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Tua moves in low against Nicholson

71 ANTWUN ECHOLS
Super Middleweight 25-4-1 (24)



Last Year's Ranking: 51
Status Report: Most recent fight was a microcosm of his down-and-up year, as wild-swinging "Kid Dynomite" rose from three knockdowns to stop Charles Brewer in the third round in May. In his previous fight, Iowa banger lost by 10th-round TKO in a foulfest with IBF middleweight champ Bernard Hopkins.
Future: Fight with Joe Calzaghe is being discussed, but what most fans really want to see is a rematch with Brewer, as their initial shootout was a leading contender for Fight of the Year as of press time.

Echols blasts Brewer into the ropes

72 ARMAND KRAJNC
Middleweight 24-0 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: The undefeated Swede's career was progressing steadily until a dispute between Bettina Palle and Peter Kohl over promotional rights threatened to bog it down. Legal scrap scuttled a July bout with Harry Simon. Scored best win last October, when he kayoed previously unbeaten Bert Schenk.
Future: Should get back on track as soon as court fight is over.

73 KIRK JOHNSON
Heavyweight 32-0-1 (23)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: 1992 Canadian Olympian took a while to get his career rolling, but finally emerged as a top contender with upset kayo of Oleg Maskaev in October '00. Didn't capitalize on the win, however, passing on a title shot against Lennox Lewis and fighting just once in the ensuing nine months before outpointing Larry Donald for the WBA's mandatory postition in July.
Future: Now the top contender to the winner of John Ruiz-Evander Holyfield III. Relatively low-risk matchmaking may pay off for versatile boxer-puncher in the end.

74 EVANDER HOLYFIELD
Heavyweight 37-5-1 (25)

Last Year's Ranking: 26
Status Report: A pair of WBA title bouts with John Ruiz (W 12, L 12) confirmed that "The Real Deal" has finally run out of miracles. The 38-year-old future Hall of Famer is exhibiting all the signs of a washed-up fighter, but stubbornly refuses to retire.
Future: Will have fought rubber match with Ruiz on Don King's China extravaganza by the time you read this.

75 BRUNO GIRARD
Light Heavyweight 39-2-1 (6)

Last Year's Ranking: 72
Status Report: Vacated WBA super middleweight title after only one defense (W 12 Manuel Siaca) and made his light heavyweight debut in May, easily disposing of Brazilian journeyman Marco Duarte (KO 4). Not much of a puncher, but a busy fighter with an iron chin.
Future: With the WBA's farcical decision to designate Roy Jones a "Super Champion," the light heavyweight title is officially vacant, and the gritty Frenchman is expected to battle Lou Del Valle for the tarnished throne.

Girard was too busy for Mitchell

76 BYRON MITCHELL
WBA Super Middleweight Champion 23-1-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 77
Status Report: Erratic bomber regained the WBA 168-pound title by stopping Manuel Siaca in March 2001. The title became vacant when Bruno Girard, who had taken the belt from Mitchell, relinquished crown to move up to light heavy.
Future: Has the punch to kayo anyone he hits cleanly, but reluctance to let his hands go has been a problem that could lead to another brief reign.

77 JOSE ANTONIO AGUIRRE
WBC Strawweight Champion 26-1-1 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: 88
Status Report: Switch-hitting Mexican made three successful defenses of the 105-pound crown since winning it in February '00, but challengers—Jose Luis Zepeda (KO 5), Erdene Chuluun (KO 4), and Manny Melchor (W 12)—have been a wholly mediocre bunch.
Future: Mandatory challenger Wolf Tokimitsu is far better than what the 26-year-old champ has faced so far, but still isn't all that threatening.

78 ROBERTO LEYVA
IBF Mini Flyweight Champion 18-0 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Unbeaten but unheralded Mexican southpaw outpointed Daniel Reyes to fill the 105-pound vacancy left when Zolani Petelo moved up in weight. Title-winning bout, his first outside of his native land, showed him to be a well-schooled boxer-puncher with good stamina.
Future: First defense not scheduled as of press time.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Leyva pulls away from Reyes' left

79 ARTUR GRIGORIAN
Lightweight 33-0 (21)

Last Year's Ranking: 76
Status Report: Has now made 14 defenses of the WBO title, but that says much more about how shoddy the second-rate sanctioning body's list of contenders is than it does about the beltholder. His most credible challenger to date was probably feather-fisted stinker Aldo Rios, whom he decisioned this past June.
Future: Mandatory challenger Juan Gomez-Trinidad is a decent fighter, made all the more dangerous by the fact that his trainer is the excellent Felix Trinidad Sr. This fight may tell us something about the Uzbek southpaw.

80 LEHLO LEDWABA
Junior Featherweight 33-2-1 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 49
Status Report: Was garnering rave reviews with his first five defenses of the IBF 122-pound belt—including a good showing against Carlos Contreras (W 12) in his American TV debut—but took a nosedive against Manny Pacquiao (KO by 6) on the Oscar De La Hoya-Francisco Castillejo show in June. South African was probably overrated all along, but maybe Pacquiao really is that good.
Future: Recovering from the Pacquiao beating, mentally and physically, won't be easy. At age 30, best days are probably behind him now.

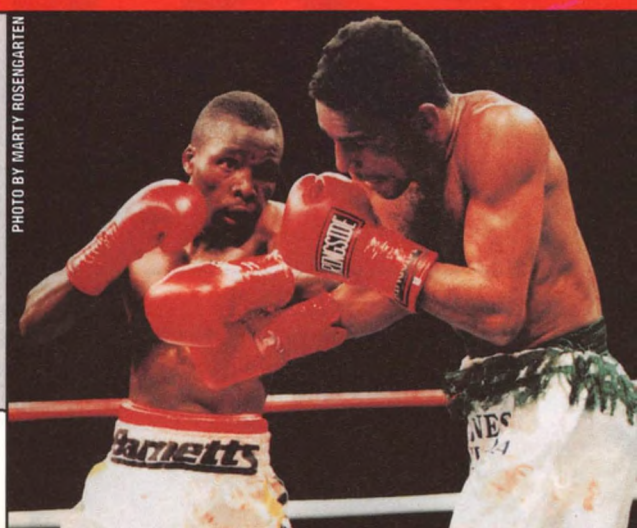


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Ledwaba (left) has Edison Valencia under pressure

81 FELIX MACHADO
IBF Junior Bantamweight Champion 21-3-1 (11)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Venezuelan stringbean has recorded two successful defenses since winning 115-pound crown from Julio Gamboa in July '00, beating William DeSousa (KO 3) and two-division former champion Mauricio Pastrana (W 12). Clever boxer, but lack of punching power could limit progress.
Future: Pastrana was mandatory, so an easy voluntary will probably be next. Unification with WBC (Masamori Tokuyama) and WBA (Celes Kobayashi) counterparts unlikely.

82 MICKY WARD
Junior Welterweight 36-10 (27)

PHOTO BY ANGIE CARLINO

Last Year's Ranking: 70
Status Report: Best run of Massachusetts veteran's career was halted in August '00, when he dropped a close 10-round decision to Antonio Diaz and then took nine months off. Returned in May with single-bodyshot, first-round kayo of Steve Quinonez.
Future: Angling for one more title shot or big payday, and he may get the latter, as a bout with Arturo Gatti is again being discussed. Forget *Friends* or *Will & Grace*; this would truly be "Must-See TV."

Ward delivers a right during slugfest with Reggie Green

83 FRANKIE TOLEDO
IBF Featherweight Champion 40-5-1 (15)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Speedy southpaw finally won a major title after years on the club circuit by upsetting South African Mbulelo Botile (W 12) in April '01. Compensates for lack of pop with movement and slick boxing.
Future: First defense not scheduled as of press deadline, but it's going to be tough hanging on to belt in such a talent-rich division.

84 MBULELO BOTILE
Featherweight 27-2 (16)

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Former bantamweight champ seemed to revive career last December when he beat Paul Ingle for the IBF featherweight title, but the near-tragic consequences for Ingle apparently affected the South African, and he promptly dropped the belt to underdog Frankie Toledo in a listless performance.
Future: Despite being one of the most skillful feathers in the world, will need to regroup mentally in order to remain a player.

Toledo survives right to take title from Botile

85 STEVE FORBES
IBF Junior Lightweight Champion 19-1 (5)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Light-hitting boxer has not fought since winning the vacant title with an eighth-round TKO of veteran warhorse John Brown in December '00. Training injury (bad back) delayed first defense.
Future: A rematch with Brown (who lost first bout on a freak ear injury) is scheduled for August, and if he's successful again against "The Eastern Beast," undefeated Lamont Pearson is next.

86 DAVID REID
Middleweight 17-1 (7)

Last Year's Ranking: 25
Status Report: Gallant defeat to Felix Trinidad may have ended "The American Dream's" career as a top-flight fighter. Debatable decision win over journeyman Kirino Garcia (in which an exhausted Reid was dropped in the final round), pedestrian points win over Urbano Gurrola, and unanimous decision over semi-retired Maurice Brantley ran the '96 Olympic gold medalist's streak to eight fights without a knockout.
Future: Strongly considering a move to super middleweight, and hoping for a bout with the Trinidad-Bernard Hopkins winner. But he'll need to score some impressive victories before a fight like that looks viable.

87 JULIEN LORCY
WBA Lightweight Champion 49-2-2 (35)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Became a two-time WBA titlist by decisioning Takanori Hatakeyama in Japan on July 1. Previous reign lasted less than four months, as Frenchman kayoed Jean-Baptiste Mendy in April '99, then lost to second-rate Stefano Zoff in first defense.
Future: WBA's contenders are a weak bunch, but don't be surprised if the inconsistent new champ falls from his perch soon anyway.

88 CELES KOBAYASHI
WBA Super Flyweight Champion 23-4-3 (14)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Dramatically improved Japanese fighter earned a draw in title shot against then-WBC fly champ Malcolm Tunacao last August, then came through with a 10th-round knockout of aging Leo Gamez seven months later to claim the WBA super fly title. Durable, game, aggressive, and a strong bodypuncher, but not the most skilled guy out there.
Future: Mandatory challenger is Alexander Munoz, a Venezuelan with a 16-0 (16) record and a recent fifth-round kayo of Sornpichai Pisnurachank. Looks like trouble.

89 JULIO DIAZ
Lightweight 22-0 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: The younger brother of junior welter Antonio Diaz just might be the best fighter in the family. Attracted a lot of positive attention when he thrashed previously undefeated Justo Sencion (KO 9) in April '01 on HBO. Dynamite bodypuncher.
Future: Has a Univision date coming up against a TBA-type opponent, then a bigger fight in the fall.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Diaz (right) becomes the first to beat Sencion

90 DANIEL SEDA
Featherweight 17-0 (15)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Puerto Rican banger raised eyebrows on Felix Trinidad-William Joppy undercard by winning thrilling, four-knockdown brawl with three-time former world champ Nana Konadu via ninth-round stoppage. Trained by Felix Trinidad Sr.
Future: Konadu bout was billed as a WBA eliminator, and you have to give the hard-hitting 25-year-old a strong chance against tinsel-chinned WBA champ Derrick Gainer.

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Seda (right) mixes it up with Konadu

91 CHARLES BREWER
Super Middleweight 36-8 (26)

Last Year's Ranking: 78
Status Report: Former IBF 168-pound champ failed in September '00 attempt to regain his old title, dropping a close 12-round decision to Sven Ottke in Germany. Rebounded with one-round blitz of Esteban Cervantes, but was then stopped by Antwun Echols (KO by 3) in a wild shootout.
Future: At 31 years of age, he wants to concentrate strictly on money fights. Joe Calzaghe, Omar Sheika, or a rematch with Echols are top priorities.

92 COLIN DUNNE
Lightweight 33-1 (23)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Talented Liverpudlian came back from 17-month layoff with a pair of tuneup wins in July '00, then won an excellent bout with world-class Billy Schwer in October to regain any stature lost during his time off.
Future: Because he holds the low-rent WBU title, not rated in the top 10 by any of the top sanctioning bodies. Regardless, at age 30, needs to fight more frequently and against better opposition than sub-.500 Barrie Kelley, whom he starched in June in his first fight in eight months.

93 JORGE LACIERVA
Bantamweight 19-3-3 (11)

Last Year's Ranking: 83
Status Report: Gave then-IBF junior bantam champ Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson all sorts of hell before losing via cut-eye technical decision back in '99, but hasn't been able to garner another title shot, despite posting five additional wins since then. Holds win over Mauricio Pastrana (W 12).
Future: Will simply have to keep busy until another opportunity presents itself.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Lacierva has "Too Sharp" in trouble

94 MOUNT WHITAKER
Heavyweight 23-1 (19)

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: It all started to click this year for the 6'8", 250-pound monster who looked so mechanical in losing to Lou Savarese two years ago. A second-round blastout of previously undefeated Robert Davis was followed by a two-round drubbing of top-10 contender Oleg Maskaev that drew comparisons to a young George Foreman in its effortless brutality.
Future: Savarese called him out recently, and the much-improved California giant would almost certainly avenge his only loss if he accepts the challenge. Another possibility is a bout with fellow behemoth Wladimir Klitschko.

Monte Barrett and Whitaker trade shots

95 BRONCO McKART
Junior Middleweight 43-3 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 89
Status Report: Seasoned southpaw's lengthy winning streak came to an end in September '00, when he lost to Winky Wright (L 12) for the second time.
Future: Should be in a good position to challenge the winner of either the Fernando Vargas-Shibata Flores (WBA) or Robert Frazier-Wright (IBF) bouts to fill the 154-pound vacancies left by Felix Trinidad when he moved up to 160-pounds.

96 DeMARCUS CORLEY
Junior Welterweight 26-1-1 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Made the best of an unexpected opportunity, subbing for Ener Julio when the Colombian pulled out of his fight with Felix Flores in order to have cataract surgery. "Chop Chop" crushed Flores, flooring him twice for a first-round TKO on Showtime.
Future: Obligated to fight Julio as soon as he's recovered from surgery, which shouldn't be too much of a problem, as the Washington, D.C., southpaw already decisioned him in 1999.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Ref Jay Nady stops the Corley-Flores fight

97 JOHNNY NELSON
Cruiserweight 39-12-1 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: 86
Status Report: Resurrected cruiser hasn't lost since he moved down from heavyweight in '95, but has only fought twice since last year's rankings, beating unremarkable Adam Watt (KO 5) and George Arias (W 12).
Future: Has scrapped foolish talk of fighting Mike Tyson, and is scheduled to meet former WBC boss Marcelo Dominguez in defense of lightly regarded WBO cruiser belt on July 21.

98 THOMAS DAMGAARD
Welterweight 25-0 (20)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Danish southpaw has kept a busy schedule, working his way into the rankings with seven wins in '99, five in '00, and three in the first half of '01. Has three former world champs on his resume—Khalid Rahilou (KO 4), Greg Haugen (KO 5), and Philip Holiday (W 12)—though all were on the way down by the time he fought them.
Future: Rated in the top 10 by all three major alphabet groups, including a number-two ranking from the WBA. Though he'd be an underdog, might have a chance against "Six Heads" Lewis.

99 JESSE JAMES LEIJA
Lightweight 42-6-2 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Former WBC super featherweight champ is enjoying an Indian Summer at age 35, having turned in several impressive performances since losing to Shane Mosley in '98. Lost a highly disputed decision to Juan Lazcano in August '00, outpointed Ivan Robinson three months later, and exposed Hector Camacho Jr. en route to losing a bogus technical decision in July '01.
Future: Wants a rematch with Camacho, but not in New York and not without purse parity. Camacho, who now knows Leija can beat him, will probably look elsewhere.

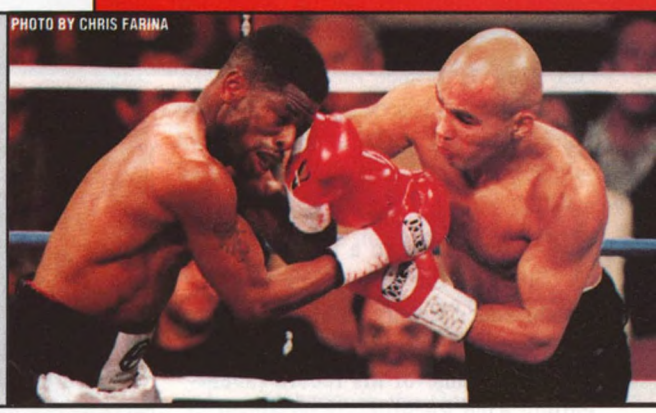


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Leija dominates Robinson

100 CHRIS BYRD
Heavyweight 33-2 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: 85
Status Report: Despite suffering his second career loss in one-sided fashion against Wladimir Klitschko (L 12) last October, bounced right back with a decision win over credible Maurice Harris in May '01 to earn the IBF's number-two position.
Future: Scheduled to face number-one rated David Tua for the IBF's mandatory position. As usual, the Michigan southpaw will be trying to overcome a serious weight disadvantage. ■

Chavez Claims Mayweather's "Overrated"

IS "EL MATADOR" FULL OF BULL?

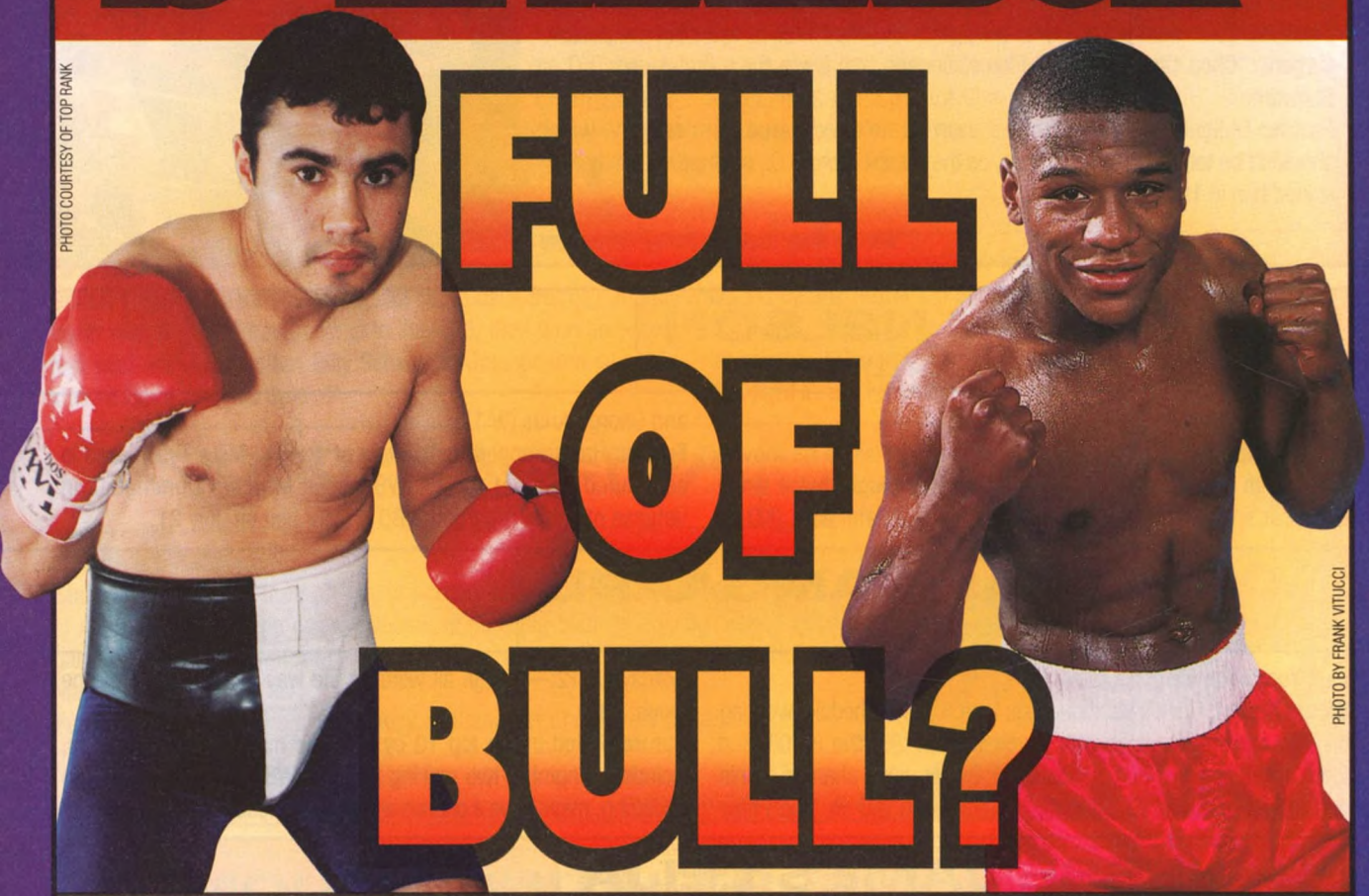


PHOTO COURTESY OF TOP RANK

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

By Kevin Iole

Floyd Mayweather's success in the ring has led to a lot of success outside the ring: a Ferrari, diamond-studded jewelry, invitations to the hippest parties. He has money and lots of it. The name of his record label—Philthy Rich Records—is testament to that. But material things are not what Mayweather, holder of the WBC super featherweight title, wants most out of boxing. His is a most difficult quest.

"Boxing has done so much for me," Mayweather said. "I'm not bragging, but I have everything I want, everything I could have imagined I would want. But you know what? That's not what I want most.

"I'm going after history. I don't want to duck anybody. I don't want anybody to say that Floyd Mayweather got out of boxing and didn't fight someone he should have fought. Line 'em up, the tougher the better. When you fight the best you can get and you win, like I do, that means something down the road."

Mayweather's next fight may be one of those that helps him along that path. He's slated to defend his title on pay-per-view, the first pay-per-view card he has headlined, against Jesus "El Matador" Chavez on October 6 in Las Vegas.

Chavez isn't widely known, largely because he has been jailed once and deported twice, all of which stemmed from an armed robbery in which he played a role. He is, however, one of the most lethal bodypunchers in the game and perhaps a good enough boxer to make it a difficult night for Mayweather.

Mayweather's promoter, Bob Arum, is convinced "Pretty Boy" is one of the top three pound-for-pound fighters in the sport. But the Chavez match won't be a walkover, Arum insisted.

"When Floyd is at his best, nobody beats him," Arum said. "But if he is off, Chavez could win this fight. It's a dangerous fight for Floyd. This guy isn't

PHOTOS BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

Mayweather and Chavez both fought on the same Grand Rapids, Michigan, card in May. While Chavez hammered out an exciting decision over rugged Juan Arias (top), Mayweather, hampered by a pair of sore hands, failed to impress in outpointing Carlos Hernandez (above).

someone in off the street. He is a legitimate opponent who Floyd has to take seriously."

Mayweather, 26-0 (19), had always been viewed as a supremely talented prospect, but he stunned many long-time boxing observers with the suddenness with which he ascended to the top of his division. He won the title by completely taking apart classy veteran champion Genaro Hernandez. He blew past an overmatched Angel Manfredy in little more than a round. He routed Diego Corrales, winning every round and scoring five knockdowns in a fight more lopsided than a Lakers-Clippers game.

Chavez, among the most sincere and personable fighters in the game, acknowledged Mayweather's skill, but said Mayweather has his flaws.

"As good as Floyd is, he is overrated," said Chavez, who is being trained by Ronnie Shields. "I'm confident to the fullest. There's absolutely nothing about Floyd that really scares me. He has had his way with fighters before, but it's going to be different with me. Floyd is going into an entirely different situation than he's ever been in before."

Mayweather's father, Floyd Sr., is one of the game's best and most outspoken trainers. He used to train his son until a nasty split led to them rarely talking. They had a brief reconciliation the week of the Corrales fight, but they still hardly speak. Pretty Boy is now trained by his uncle, former world champion Roger Mayweather. Mayweather Sr. said his son is going backward under Uncle Roger's tutelage.

"He's been getting hit by bums, and this guy is not a bum," the elder Mayweather said of Chavez. "Little Floyd had a bloody nose in his last fight [a 12-round decision over Carlos "Famosito" Hernandez on May 26] in the second round. You see, my point is, the thing that makes Little Floyd special is that he could hit and not be hit. That's boxing. Now, he's getting hit, too, and he's getting banged up. My son has too many skills to be getting hit like this, and he can't afford it against a guy like Chavez."

Pretty Boy scoffs at the remark and notes that he has been at his best in his biggest fights. His best performance, far and away, came in the Corrales fight, when he was trained by his uncle. The WBC super featherweight champion said he has a way of lifting his game when the stakes are highest. He did it against Hernandez, he did it against Manfredy and, most particularly, he did it against Corrales. Chavez, he said, will see a lot of the same.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Mayweather insists that he fights best when facing tough opposition and points to his 10th-round knockout of dangerous Diego Corrales (pictured) as proof. "Pretty Boy" claims that Chavez will get the same kind of treatment in their October showdown.

"Everybody talked so much about how good Genaro was," Mayweather said. "Well, if he was that good, then I showed I was great. They talked about Manfredy; he was tough, he was this, he was that. What did I do with him? Then there was Corrales. This was the guy who could beat me. He was big. He had this bad punch. Well, remember what happened that night?"

When asked what the keys will be for him to defeat Chavez, the fresh-faced fighter laughed heartily and turned it around. He began to interrogate his interrogator.

"What do *I* have to do?" he asked. "You should be asking him what he is going to do with me. I'd like to hear that. He's not in there with just another guy."

Mayweather will likely try to use his legs to keep Chavez at a distance while flicking the jab in his face. When he uses it, Mayweather has a strong jab that can break a fighter down. He is quick enough to throw the hard right hand behind the jab and then dart out of danger as the counters are coming.

Chavez, 35-1 (24), has seen all that and is duly unimpressed. He's convinced that he is underrated and, more significantly, stereotyped. He is not the

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Chavez, known for his body attack, utilizes his left jab en route to an eighth-round technical decision over Louie Espinoza in 1997. The challenger says he's much more than a crude slugger and will surprise Mayweather with his boxing skills.

typical Mexican fighter who throws defense to the wind and bores ahead for three minutes a round, taking two to give one.

"Mayweather is an excellent boxer, and I understand that," Chavez said. "But I can box, too. I'm a pretty good boxer when I want to be. Not a lot of people have seen me box, but I can box pretty well when the situation calls for it. I like to think I'm pretty adaptable."

That, Chavez believes, is one of his distinct advantages. Mayweather doesn't have the ability to turn into a brawler, he said, and is in that sense one-dimensional. If the fight turns into a brawl, Chavez said he can put Mayweather into situations he hasn't faced in his highly successful career.

"I have the power to get him in trouble and the anger to finish him off," Chavez said. "I've been through some times in my life, and now I have gotten over that and have a chance to fulfill a dream. I'm not just going to melt. He's going to feel something he hasn't felt before."

That causes Roger Mayweather to cackle. He has been working on adding a more efficient offense to his nephew's repertoire to go along with his superlative defensive skills. And while most people think of his nephew as a skillful boxer, Uncle Roger said it is a mistake to underestimate his punching power.

"Believe me, Floyd has big-time power in them hands," the trainer insisted. "He does damage; he's just not tapping."

The problem from his father's standpoint is that his son is getting tapped back too often. Mayweather Sr. said his son's ability to make an opponent miss and then pay is what made him special. He said his brother isn't adequately preparing his son.

"How can my brother train my son when my son knows more than him?" said Mayweather Sr., who is now the full-time trainer of both Oscar De La Hoya and Erik Morales.

All Chavez knows is that the dispute between father, son, and brother can't be helping Mayweather to get ready for the fight. He said that while Corrales was an outstanding fighter, Mayweather fought him at the right time. He said Corrales' problems in making weight and his legal situation conspired against him. Corrales was facing charges of felony spousal abuse leading up to the fight with Mayweather, for which Mayweather and manager James Prince taunted him mercilessly. Corrales since pled guilty and is now serving a two-year sentence in a California prison.

"Corrales was almost a welterweight and he was trying to get down to junior lightweight," Chavez said. "Everybody knows what that did to him. He had the court case ahead of him and a lot of personal problems. No matter what he said, he didn't have his focus entirely on Mayweather.

"Me, it's a different story. There's nothing Floyd can say, after what I have been through in my life, that will take me off what I'm trying to do. He's going to see me at my best, in all ways."

Chavez was just shy of 18 and living in Chicago in 1990 when a pair of gang members brought him along on what turned out to be an armed robbery. He

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Although they were briefly reconciled the week of the Corrales fight, Mayweather and his father still aren't on good terms. Floyd Sr. says his son is getting hit too much now that he's not training him.

was caught, convicted, and spent nearly four years in jail. When he got out, he was deported to Mexico. After years of trying, he finally solved his immigration problems and returned to fight in the U.S. Even so, he lost valuable time in the ring, but not the hunger or the passion to be a champion.

"I made mistakes, but I have fought my way past them and I am putting all of my energy on one thing, and that is beating Floyd Mayweather," Chavez said. "I'm going to take him places in there he's never been."

Mayweather says much the same thing. He is on a constant crusade to convince the critics that he is as much substance as style. While his father saw flaws in his recent win over Hernandez, Mayweather saw only superlatives.

He had two bad hands that were checked only a few days before the fight by Dr. Tony Daly, an orthopedist in Los Angeles. According to Mayweather, had the fight been anywhere but in Mayweather's hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, he would have postponed it.

"The Arena Football team had a game moved so that I could fight in the building, and the people had all come out to support me," said Mayweather. "It wouldn't have been right to cancel the fight under those circumstances. I had bad hands *before* the fight, but I'm a man. I knew I would get through it, and I did."

Mayweather, whose ability to trash talk may have been exceeded in recent times only by Michael Jordan's, said it's easy to talk before one gets in the ring with him.

"Before the fight, they can say what they want," Mayweather said. "I fought a guy with no hands, and I still won the fight and just about every round. Think about that. How many other guys could have done that? I'm just different than the rest of these guys." ■

Kevin Iole covers boxing for the Las Vegas Review-Journal and is a frequent contributor to this magazine.

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

Promoter Bob Arum believes that if Mayweather isn't at his very best, Chavez has a realistic chance of winning. "He is a legitimate opponent who Floyd has to take seriously," Arum said.

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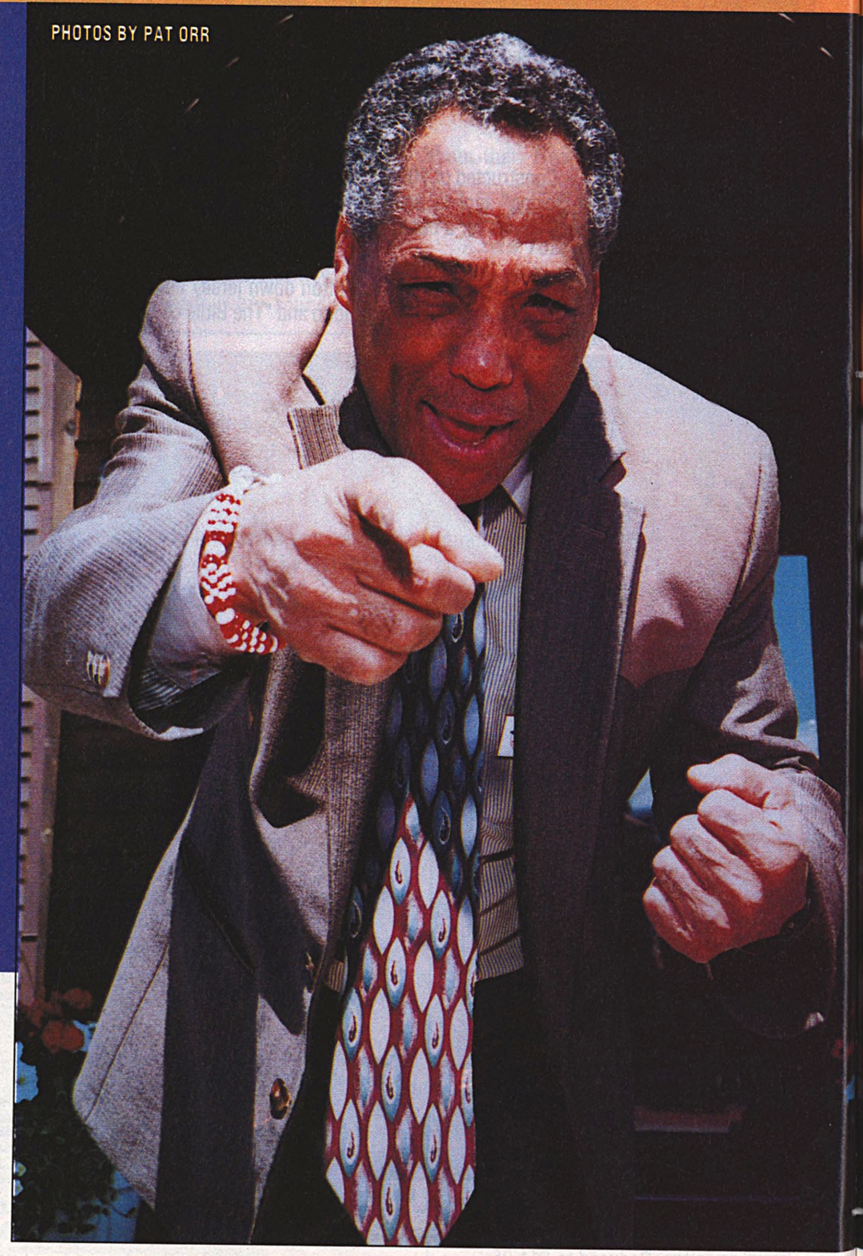
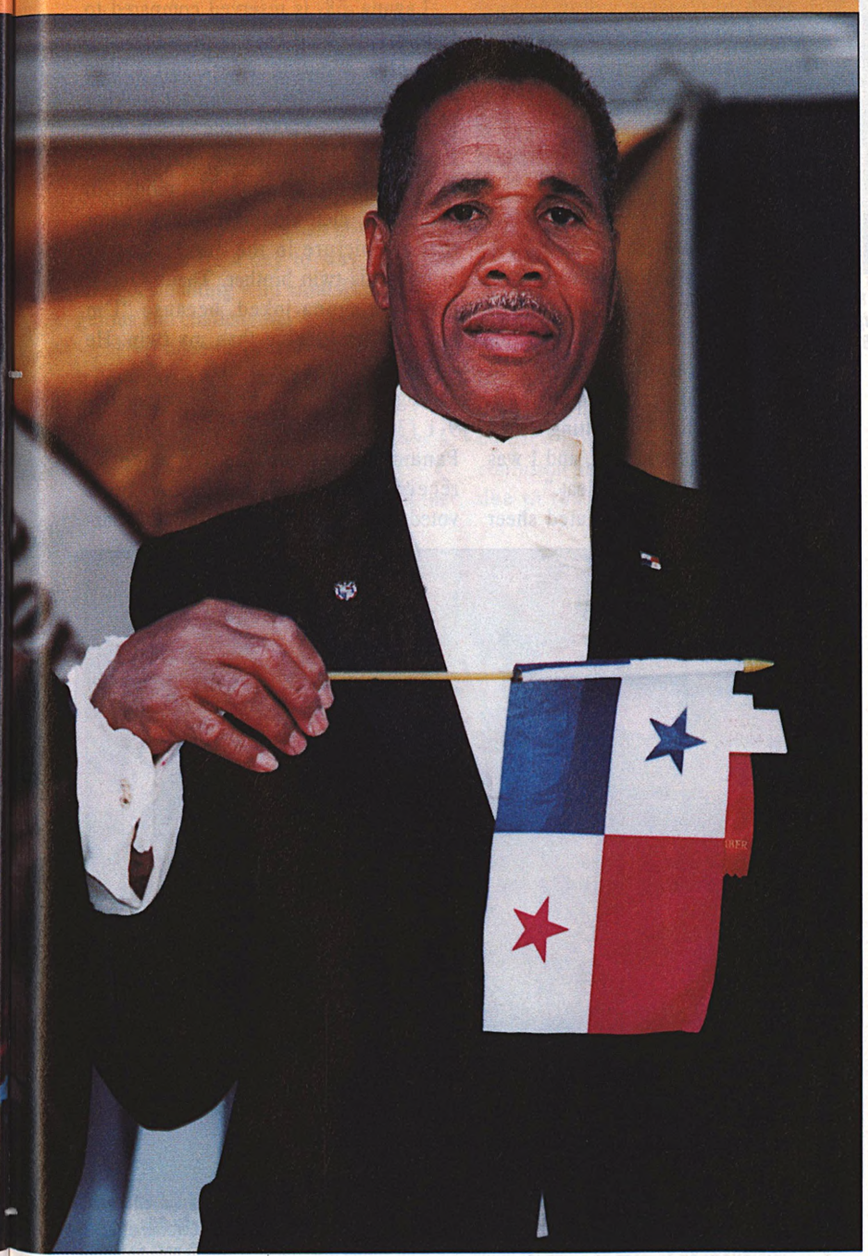
FOREVER YOUNG

HALL OF FAME WEEKEND RESTORES THE GLORY YEARS FOR RAMOS & LAGUNA

PHOTOS BY PAT ORR





By Joe Santoliquito

Old age is the predator no boxer can run from. It's more debilitating than a Felix Trinidad left hook, more internally corrosive than doing shots of tequila in a smoke-filled room. It can infiltrate even the tightest of abs, eventually giving way to a paunchy middle. The creeping reach of age can also dull the memory, washing away any remnants of greatness.

Not so on Hall of Fame weekend in Canastota, New York. For three days in June, time stopped and reversed gears for Ismael Laguna and Ultiminio "Sugar" Ramos. They were champions again. Laguna and Ramos could not take two steps without someone stopping them for a picture or an autograph, to which they happily obliged. In fact, Laguna and Ramos seem to have made time a companion since their retirements, able to adjust to life out of the limelight and continue to be as virile and vibrant as they were during their championship days.

Laguna and Ramos were two of the living inductees at the 12th Annual International Boxing Hall of Fame ceremony on June 10. Promoter Don Chargin, cartoonist/columnist Bill Gallo, cutman Ralph Citro, and middleweight contender/acclaimed trainer George Benton, all fellow members of the Class of 2001, were on hand as well, while middleweight great Laszlo Papp was unable to make the trip from his native Hungary to Canastota due to health reasons. Posthumous inductees included fighters Willie Pastrano, Randy Turpin, Paul Berlenbach, Jim Braddock, Billy Papke, and Midget Wolgast, and non-participants Sam Ichinose, Lester Bromberg, and Barney Aaron.

"I would like to thank all of the promoters, trainers, and fans I've received this weekend, but most of all, I'd like to thank God," said Laguna during his induction speech. "I'm glad I was able to receive all of these awards while I was alive and not deceased."

Said Ramos, who will turn 60 in December: "This is even more beautiful than I expected, now that I know people haven't forgotten me. This is great because it's lasting."

It's fighters like Laguna and Ramos

Inductees Sugar Ramos (far left) and Ismael Laguna were the stars of the 2001 induction weekend at the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Both former champions had a wonderful time, reliving old times and mingling with their many fans.

Laguna meets former rival and 2000 IBHOF inductee Ken Buchanan, who beat the Panamanian to win the lightweight title in 1970. They're joined by cartoonist/columnist Bill Gallo, who was inducted into the non-participant category.

that were the salt of boxing. Though they were both champions in the 1960s, that's where the similarities end. During two title reigns as lightweight champ, Laguna was noted for his lightning speed and remarkable reflexes, while featherweight champ Ramos was more known for his brawling tactics, granite fists, and unfortunate ring deaths to opponents Davey Moore and Jose "Tiger" Blanco.

"The biggest regrets I've ever had were the two deaths in the ring," said Ramos, through an interpreter, Edgardo Leon, a volunteer worker at the Hall of Fame that weekend. "I live my life day-by-day, and I know that people live and that people die. What I've learned is that people die and you can't do anything about that. You can't go back. I just think about living, and living to 100. I'm better than halfway there, and I still have a long way to go."

The Cuban Ramos is still spry, despite his age. The father of six, whose ages range from 23 to 43, plus one adopted child, Ramos stays busy training kids in Mexico and playing music with his band, Ultiminio Ramos and Sugar. His hands are wrinkled, but still strong. As are certain inner drives ...

"I have to have sex to stay active; that's what I do," said Ramos, as his son, Sugar Jr., stood nearby looking at his father, laughing while shaking his head. "Yes, that is the best exercise, when a man can sweat while making love."

In preparing for his trip to Canastota, Ramos lost track of the time. He was attending the funeral of one of his son's mothers when he heard the news he was inducted. "When I heard that, it made me forget all of the problems that I had," Ramos recalled. "I've enjoyed everything this weekend, because I went nearly two days without eating, getting ready for this. I was moving back and forth, getting this and getting that. I was moving around so much, and I was so excited for this, I forgot to eat."

Ramos, 55-7-4 (40), radiated sheer joy throughout the three-day affair. He spent almost as much time hugging and kissing well-wishers as he did posing for pictures and signing autographs. "I'm coming back after 60," Ramos warned, letting out an infectious laugh. "That's if the doctor lets me. Hopefully, there will be enough old people around for me to fight.

"See, this weekend is great, because I enjoy boxing. If I could go back in time, I'd do some things a little differently, I'd just hit and run. I'd like to think I was smart in the ring, but now I'd use a little of everything."

Laguna, 58, is reserved compared to Ramos (as would be a hyperactive six-year-old). Wearing a dark suit with a ruffled white shirt, Laguna sat looking at the September 2001 issue of THE RING EXTRA, naming him as one of the top 20 lightweights of all-time. He nodded in agreement, then kiddingly told a visitor that his picture in the magazine was actually his twin brother. Thank God it wasn't, Laguna joked, because "I'm much better looking than my twin. He doesn't look like me at all."

Laguna, who finished his career 66-9-1 (38), was sitting in his home in Panama City watching TV when he received the news that he had been voted into the Hall of Fame. Upon hear-

Former featherweight champion Ramos and two-time former lightweight boss Laguna share a moment during the induction ceremonies. Both old warriors, who are now in their late-50s, were delighted to know that the fans hadn't forgotten them.

ing this, Laguna became so emotional, he began jumping around. His reaction sent a minor shock wave through his family, as they tried to calm him down. Then he informed them of the good news. To Laguna, being inducted meant that he reached the pinnacle of his former profession.

As with Ramos, Hall of Fame weekend marked a revival of a special stage in Laguna's life.

"I feel like a student who has gone back to get his doctorate for something he loved," said Laguna, through a special interpreter, former light heavyweight champ and fellow Hall of Famer Jose Torres. "This is the highest any champion can get in anything. This has been overwhelming for me. By being inducted into the Hall of Fame, I've never been happier."

Since his retirement, Laguna has worked for the Panamanian government. He runs a mile a day to stay in shape and goes hunting wild animals. It's dangerous and challenging.

"I've become fascinated by seeing wild animals live," said Laguna, who is the father of 12. "It's nature, and I've been fascinated by nature since I was a little kid."

Laguna is not as fascinated with the politics of boxing today, and because of that, does not keep up with boxing like he used to. He said there is too much confusion about who the champions are, due to the many sanctioning bodies. During his reign, there were only eight champions, and everyone knew who the champions were.

Former middleweight contender George Benton points to his IBHOF plaque. Although he was an outstanding boxer, Benton was inducted for his work as a trainer. Evander Holyfield, Meldrick Taylor, and Pernell Whitaker were among his students.

"You become the champion by beating the champion. It's not like that today," Laguna said. "But this weekend has been fantastic. It makes me feel alive again, like I'm a champion again. It makes me feel proud and very good. The ambience here is terrific."

Don Majeski, a New York City agent who helps Ed Brophy's Hall of Fame staff, remembers Laguna very distinctly. Majeski saw Laguna win the lightweight title the second time against Mando Ramos in 1970. The first thing that came to mind was Laguna's remarkable speed.

"Laguna was the fastest fighter you'd ever want to see," Majeski said. "He'd punch the speed bag with his hands, then lie on his back and punch the speed bag with his feet, then he'd hit the bag in rhythm with his head. He was just remarkable, and he had remarkable reflexes. He had the most tremendous hand speed in my life, even better than Muhammad Ali. He was a terror to Puerto Rican fighters.

"You can see a light in Ismael's eyes this weekend, and Ramos' too. They're

WBA middleweight champion Felix Trinidad poses with longtime West Coast promoter and 2001 inductee Don Chargin. "Tito" will surely be a first-ballot inductee as soon as he is eligible.

appreciated by boxing people again. Boxing is not all the Sugar Ray Leonards and Alis. Boxing is all about guys like Laguna and Ramos. I never heard anyone say a bad word about either of them."

When Laguna regained the lightweight crown against Mando Ramos, Majeski said, the thinking was that Laguna would hold the title for 10 years. Then in his second title defense, Laguna's reign ended abruptly against Ken Buchanan, and his last bid to regain the title was thwarted by Buchanan in '71. Laguna's rise and sudden fall came at an interesting period in the lightweight class. Like two Panamanian ships passing in the night, Laguna's tumble coincided with the rise of Roberto Duran, who went on to beat Buchanan and become one of the greatest lightweights of all-time.

There was speculation raised at the time about Laguna's sudden downfall. Rumors had swirled that Laguna was diagnosed with sickle-cell anemia, a blood abnormality, toward the end of his career. Laguna reluctantly admitted he does have the disease, but remains in good health through diet and exercise.

"It's something I don't like a lot of people to know, and something I don't like to talk about," Laguna said, waving his hands and visibly irritated. "I do a lot of exercise, I rest a lot, that's what keeps me going. I go to the gym to watch young kids box, and that's what keeps me going, too."

How long Laguna continued his career with the knowledge that he had sickle-cell is an answer only he knows. But some experts who watched Laguna during his prime have a general idea of when the disease took hold and shortened his career.

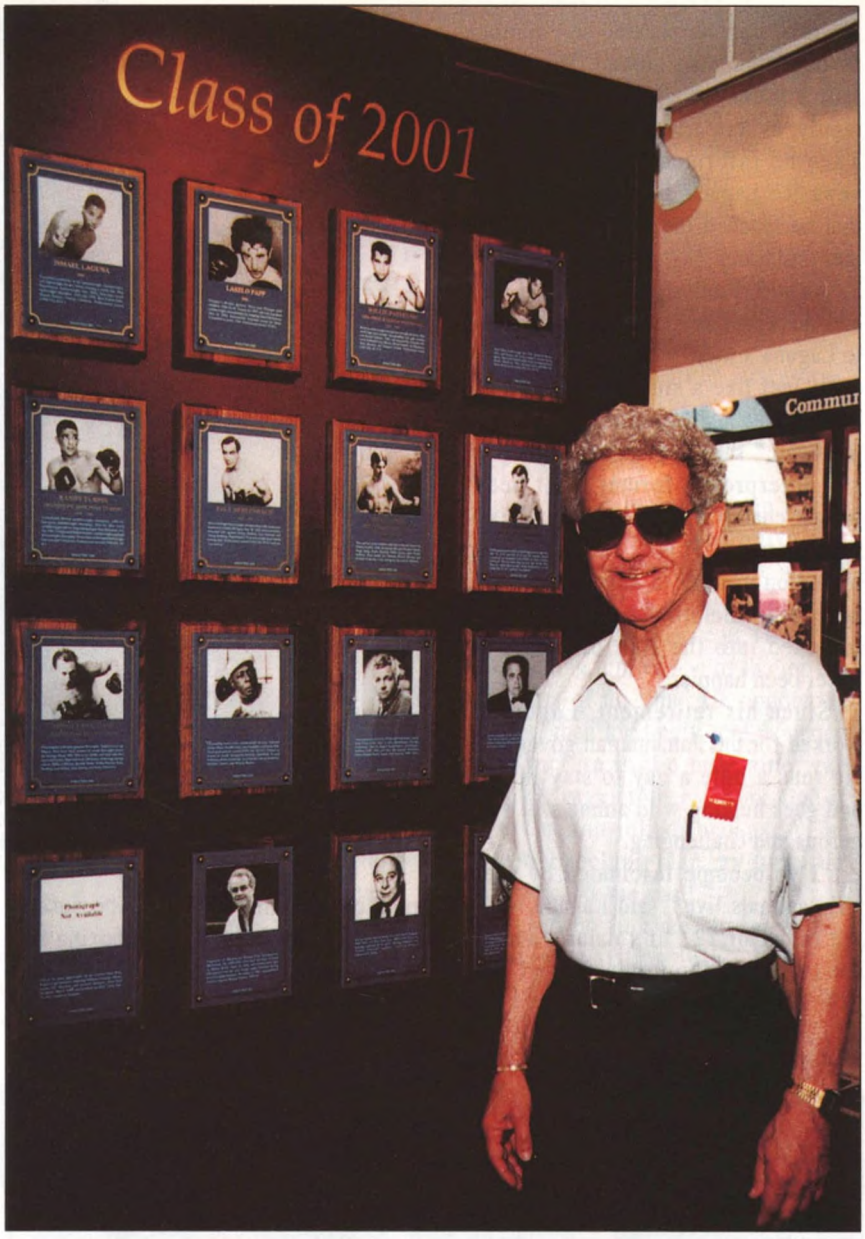
"People said it was around the time he lost twice to Buchanan that Laguna seemed to have slowed down, and that he was suffering from some type of illness," Majeski recalled. "The talk then was that it was either sickle-cell or leukemia."

Hall of Famer Carlos Ortiz has a unique perspective on both Laguna and Ramos, since he faced Laguna three times (winning twice) and Ramos twice (winning both times). Laguna won his first lightweight crown from Ortiz in '65, taking a 15-round decision. Ortiz did not know much about the skilled Panamanian boxer, and in retrospect admits now that he may have underestimated the gifted Laguna.

"I didn't think much of his qualities, but once I saw him, he reminded me of Willie Pep and I was thinking, *Oh God*," Ortiz remembered with a grin. "I was surprised at the speed of the kid. He was faster than Superman. I went after him, but couldn't catch him. The second and third fights were different. I knew who I was fighting and I was prepared."

Ortiz faced a completely different struggle with Ramos. Whereas he had to find Laguna, Ramos was right there in front of him, plowing straight rights and left hooks into his body and face. Ortiz laughs at the memory, because, "I didn't think Sugar had that kind of power. I went out nonchalantly, had my left hand down, and *blam*! That knocked me down. I became careful. After that, I went back to my boxing skills."

Minutes after the induction ceremony, Buchanan, a 2000 inductee, added, "This will stay with Sugar and Ismael, as it will with me, for the rest of our lives. There is nothing as grand and with the splendor like this for a retired boxer." ■



Another member of the Class of 2001 was Ralph Citro. Although he has served as cutman and trainer during his long career, it was Citro's introduction of computerized record keeping in the early-'80s that was his greatest gift to the sport.

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A Matter Of Minutes

HOW THE DEMISE OF 15-ROUNDERS ALTERED HISTORY

By William Dettloff

More than any other professional athletes, fighters run out of time. It happens more to accomplished guys than it does to everyday pugs, because if you're a pug, more time is what you don't want. That's just more time to take a beating. But the good ones, and even the great ones sometimes, run out of time; at the end of their careers, at the end of a round, at the end of a fight. "If I just had a few more seconds in that round," we hear a guy say who pulled the trigger too late, or "if I just had one more round," from a slow starter who was coming on at the end and had the last bell snatch a victory real or imagined.

Fighters run out of time. It happens more at the end of fights now than it used to because in the 1980s the three ruling governing bodies got together and decided—ostensibly for improved safety, but probably for other reasons far less altruistic—that title fights should be 12 rounds rather than 15. Maybe they knew it at the time, maybe they didn't, that as each of them reduced the distance—first the WBC, then the WBA, and finally the IBF, in 1988—that ultimately they would

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Felix Trinidad took a controversial 12-round decision over Oscar De La Hoya by coming on strong the last three rounds of their September 1999 showdown. What strategies would the fighters have employed had the bout been scheduled for 15 rounds?

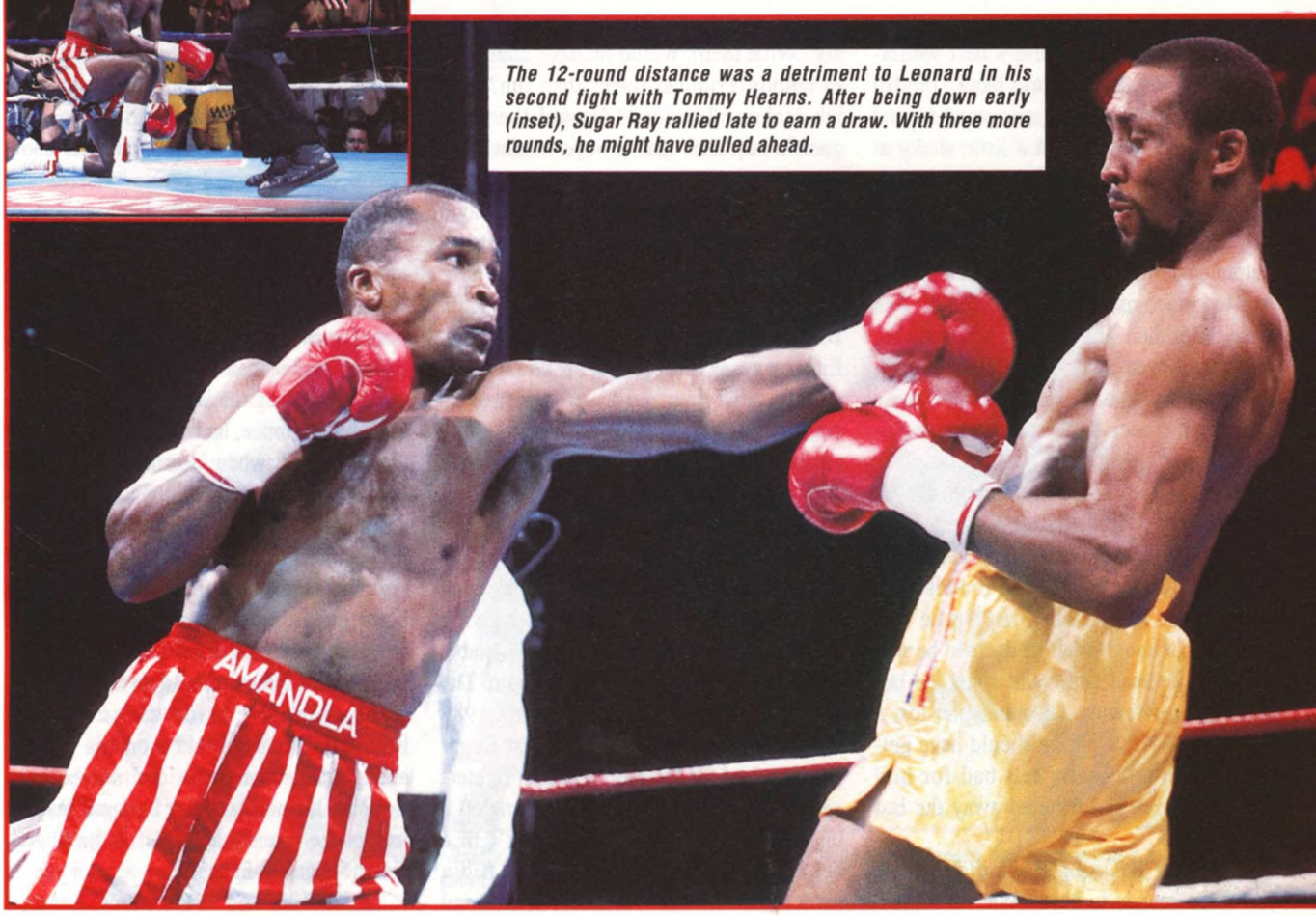
change fight game history, little by little, one fight at a time.

You might think, big deal. Three rounds. It's just nine minutes. Most fights are decided within the first round or two and the rest is just the result working itself out. But consider: What if the distance had always been 12 rounds? What if there never were 15-rounders? All things remaining equal, maybe Jersey Joe Walcott decisions Rocky Marciano. Maybe Jake LaMotta loses the middleweight title to Laurent Dauthuille. Maybe Mike Weaver never lands the hook against John Tate. Maybe Thomas Hearns gets to make Ray Leonard wait eight years for a rematch.

The number of fights is finite, but the possibilities are not. Fighters are temperamental, and each contest weighs heavily on every one that follows it. Nine minutes have broken men and lifted them. It's how each second is played out that matters, yes, but if they don't exist, they can't be played. How many losers might be winners had they just had those nine extra minutes to gamble? And how many winners escaped that way because they didn't have to play out those seconds we used to call the championship rounds? Sometimes winners and losers are separated by distances equal in time to eons. Sometimes by milliseconds. Nine minutes can be all the difference.

Oscar De La Hoya had it all figured out against Felix Trinidad when they met to

A lot of people think that Ray Leonard won his fight with Marvin Hagler at the negotiating table, when Hagler agreed to 12 rounds instead of 15. With the three additional rounds, Hagler may have been able to overcome Leonard's early lead.



The 12-round distance was a detriment to Leonard in his second fight with Tommy Hearns. After being down early (inset), Sugar Ray rallied late to earn a draw. With three more rounds, he might have pulled ahead.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Jose Luis Lopez rips into Ike Quartey during their 1997 battle for the WBA welterweight title. Lopez came on strong the last few rounds, but Quartey held on to keep the title via a 12-round draw.

decide who was the world's best welterweight fighter. A lot of guys liked Trinidad going in. He was the bigger puncher, and De La Hoya had looked a little shaky at welterweight—against Pernell Whitaker, against Ike Quartey. But "The Golden Boy" knew what to go with. He couldn't outpunch Trinidad, and even if he could, it was too much of a risk to take. But his feet were faster than Trinidad's, his hands were faster, and even if he couldn't hit as hard, he could use those faster hands and those faster feet, especially the faster feet, to outbox him.

The plan worked to perfection. De La Hoya boxed Trinidad stupid in the early rounds, bloodied his nose, and kept it up through most of the middle rounds. The crowd wasn't crazy about it, but he was putting on a show when he decided he was far enough ahead and could coast the last three or four rounds. Of course, he lost a decision most thought he should have gotten, but no one really felt bad for him because he ran and frittered away the last three rounds.

But what if De La Hoya didn't have just three rounds to burn? What if he had six? What then? Would he have continued to outbox Trinidad rather than run? And what about Trinidad? Would the fight game's best slow starter have caught up in the championship rounds and given De La Hoya a little of what he would give David Reid down the road? Maybe nothing changes. Maybe De La Hoya would have just started the coast later, say the 12th. But he was tiring. Trinidad was coming on. Either way, as it happened, the end was not wholly satisfying; not exactly controversial, but lacking a distinct, demonstrated superiority either way. What we would give for those lost nine minutes. What Trinidad would have given for them had he lost.

If you asked Marvin Hagler today what his biggest regret is, he might say giving up those nine minutes at a negotiating table 14 years ago. He could have had them. The WBC was willing to sanction his 1987 middleweight title defense against Sugar Ray Leonard for the full 15 if both fighters agreed. But Leonard, who had dangled a big-money fight in front of Hagler's face before, only to withdraw the offer, had a few conditions if he was going to sign, and one of them was that the distance would be 12 rounds. He knew it took Hagler a few rounds to get those 33-year-old limbs loosened up, and he also knew that, having been off for three years, he'd have a hell of a hard time fending off Marvelous Marvin for 45 minutes. And while he was at it, would he mind wearing bigger gloves, too, and taking a bigger ring?

Hagler bought all of it. He wanted to get paid, and besides, Leonard couldn't beat him. But he did. Hagler gave away the first four rounds and started slowly chopping Leonard down in the fight's midsection. By the 11th and 12th, Hagler was just about warming up, while Leonard, blazing-fast combinations or not, was fading. Too late. The crowd and the judges liked Leonard's pizzazz, and before we knew it, Hagler was off learning Italian. It wasn't Leonard that did Hagler in. And the gloves and ring were not deal-breakers. It was those missing nine minutes. He keeps those, maybe we're spared Leonard's next seven comebacks.

It was ironic that just two years later, it was Leonard who could have used another three rounds at the end. It was then, in 1989, that he finally gave Hearns a rematch to their classic 1981 battle that Leonard won with a 14th-round stoppage and that haunted Hearns still, eight years later. Most figured the rematch came about now because Leonard guessed Hearns was shot. It looked to most like he was right. In his last two fights, Hearns had been flattened, shockingly and dramatically, by Iran Barkley, and had barely gotten by an ordinary James Kinchen. Those stick-like legs looked weaker than ever.

For most of the match it looked like Leonard, for once, had been wrong. Unlike the first fight, when Hearns gained a lead by moving and outboxing Leonard, this time he stood still on the outside and picked Leonard off with long jabs and right crosses. When Leonard tried to counter and get inside, Hearns either smacked him with a hook or tied him up. In the middle rounds, a series of long rights connected and twice floored Leonard. Hearns looked on his way to avenging that long-ago loss, maybe even stopping his nemesis. But Leonard made it to the late rounds, and, just as he hoped, Hearns began to fade.

In the 10th and 11th rounds, Leonard

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

Guty Espadas drives a left hand into Erik Morales' midsection en route to losing a 12-round decision and the WBC featherweight title. Espadas had Morales reeling in the final round of a close fight, and may very well have won if it had been a 15-rounder.

took over, getting inside and landing overhand rights and left hooks. He staggered Hearns and, in the 11th, looked close to stopping him. He had to be behind on the cards, and he pounced on Hearns in the 12th, going for the knockout. Hearns wobbled and teetered and lurched all over the ring, as close to going down as a fighter could be without actually touching the mat. When the final bell rang, Leonard was whaling on him in a corner. The draw incensed Hearns and his fans. Was it unjust? Sure. But it beat the hell out of getting knocked out, which is what would have happened to Hearns had it been a 15-rounder.

Hearns must have felt a kinship with former WBA welterweight champion Ike Quartey when Quartey barely survived the challenge of reluctant bomber Jose Luis Lopez in their October 1997 struggle. Remember that this was not the Quartey we see now, or rather, that we don't see now. In '97, "Bazooka" was a dominant champion, an undefeated slugger with five defenses to his credit and the best jab in the business. He had just come off knockouts of Vince Phillips and Ralph Jones and a decision over Oba Carr. He looked near invincible. A big-money fight with De La Hoya loomed. Lopez? A kid with loads of natural talent and a great hook, but a beach bum of a fighter, a kid who liked to surf and party and fought probably just because he was good at it and it gave him something to do between cocktail hours.

It was only the second round when Lopez countered a hook to the body with a short right that clipped Quartey on the jaw and brought him a flash knockdown. No worry; Quartey's jab put him back in charge, and for the next eight rounds all Lopez did was eat jabs. But in the 10th, he wobbled Quartey again with a right, and in the 11th, all hell broke loose. A four-punch combination landed and drove Quartey hard to the canvas. Over two minutes remained in the round, and Lopez tried to finish, but couldn't. Quartey came out still hurt in the 12th and he wasn't bashful; he ran, grabbed, clutched, and did everything he could do to make it through the round. He did and retained the title with a draw. Maybe he would have made it another three rounds; Lopez throws punches like each one costs him money. But maybe he wouldn't have, and maybe then it would have been Lopez who got the big-money fight against De La Hoya.

Lopez wasn't the last underdog to run out of time against one of the game's bigger names. Last February, Guty Espadas went in against Erik Morales knowing he was up against it. So what that he was the WBC featherweight champion. To a majority of American fight fans, he was just another fairly obscure Mexican fighter. But Morales? We all knew him. "El Terrible." We'd watched him tear apart one junior feather after another. He was on HBO all the time, beating up Wayne McCullough, beating up Junior Jones. Okay, so he got a lucky decision over Marco Antonio Barrera. It was a great fight, and for sure he'd do away with Espadas on his way to a big-money match with Naseem Hamed.

The problem with the plan was that Espadas handled Morales' power easily,

Practically everybody, except the judges, thought Jeff Fenech had done enough to win his 1991 bout with Azumah Nelson in Las Vegas. But a weary Nelson, aided by the 12-round distance, managed to retain the WBC super feather title with a draw.

and the deeper the fight went, the better he got. Early on, Morales outworked him, but the longer it went, the more clearly Espadas could see that he was right in Morales' league and could stay with him. By the middle rounds, Espadas was throwing more, landing as much, and Morales looked more than a little concerned. By the 10th and 11th rounds, the crowd was behind the underdog, and you just hoped that if the kid was going to do anything, he'd do it quick, because he was running out of time. He almost pulled it off. In the 12th, Morales was playing it safe when Espadas scored his best shot of the night, a straight right that rocked Morales back onto his heels. A short time later the bell rang, and only one of the fighters was happy for 12-round title fights. We'll let you guess which fighter it was.

Both of the Johnny Tapia-Paulie Ayala wars were hard-fought and extremely close fights, and although Ayala won both decisions, the outcome could have been more definitive had both of the bouts been scheduled for 15 rounds.

There's no doubt who was the happiest guy in the ring on June 8, 1991. And we don't mean Mike Tyson, who decisioned Razor Ruddock in the second of their two meetings. The happiest guy that night fought on the undercard, though he was no undercard fighter. It was Azumah Nelson, who retained the WBC super featherweight title with a very suspect draw against human whirlwind Jeff Fenech.

It didn't take a genius to see at the end that Fenech had beaten Nelson. He was busier—there's a shock—he was more aggressive, and he outfought him. "The Professor" had his moments, because when you're as good as he was, you're going to have them no matter who you're fighting and no matter how off you are on a given night. But as the fight went on and went into the later rounds, Nelson went flatter and flatter, like an old tire with a slow leak. And there was Fenech, stabbing him there, picking at him there, never giving him a rest, draining him. In the 12th, he swarmed all over Nelson and battered him, and late in the round the old guy—he was only 33 but looked years older—nearly went down.

Nelson hung on, got the draw, and nine months later gave Fenech the worst beating of his life, stopping him in eight one-sided rounds and effectively finishing him as a top fighter. The fight ruined Fenech, but maybe it never would have happened had the first one been scheduled for 15 rounds. Maybe Fenech would have stopped Nelson; he was close enough to it, and maybe it would have been Nelson who was finished. Maybe Fenech would have refused a rematch and went on to enjoy a long reign. Instead, he got a long retirement.

At least there was a clear winner at the end of the Nelson-Fenech rivalry. Too often, 12-rounders end and we still don't know who the better fighter is. Johnny Tapia and Paulie Ayala have fought 24 rounds—many of them brilliant, many of them too close to call without tugs of conscience one way or the other—and two relatively arguable decisions ensued. It could be that the two will always have at it that way, that they could fight 100 rounds between them and there always will be less than a hair to separate them. Some guys have styles that mesh that way.

But maybe a 15-round affair would distinguish a more obvious winner. After all, those championship rounds were supposed to separate the greats from those who were less great. Perhaps one of the two would falter dramatically in a 15-rounder in some way that he wouldn't over 12. Maybe it wouldn't be dramatic; with those two, it needn't be in order for one to pull ahead. That's how evenly they push one another. Maybe in 15-rounders, Tapia surges in the last three and his undefeated record is still intact. Maybe it makes no difference at all. Wouldn't it be fun, though?

Former WBC lightweight champion Stevie Johnston could have used three more rounds in his September 2000 rematch with Jose Luis Castillo. The fight was so close, it initially was announced as a draw. Again, one gets the sense that the two of them could fight 30 times and split them right down the middle, but in a world of 15-rounders, maybe Johnston is still the champion and Castillo is just another strong contender. The difference, potentially, is hundreds of thousands of dollars, not to mention a different place in history. You wouldn't think nine minutes could make that much difference. They do. When you're running out of time, every second counts. ■

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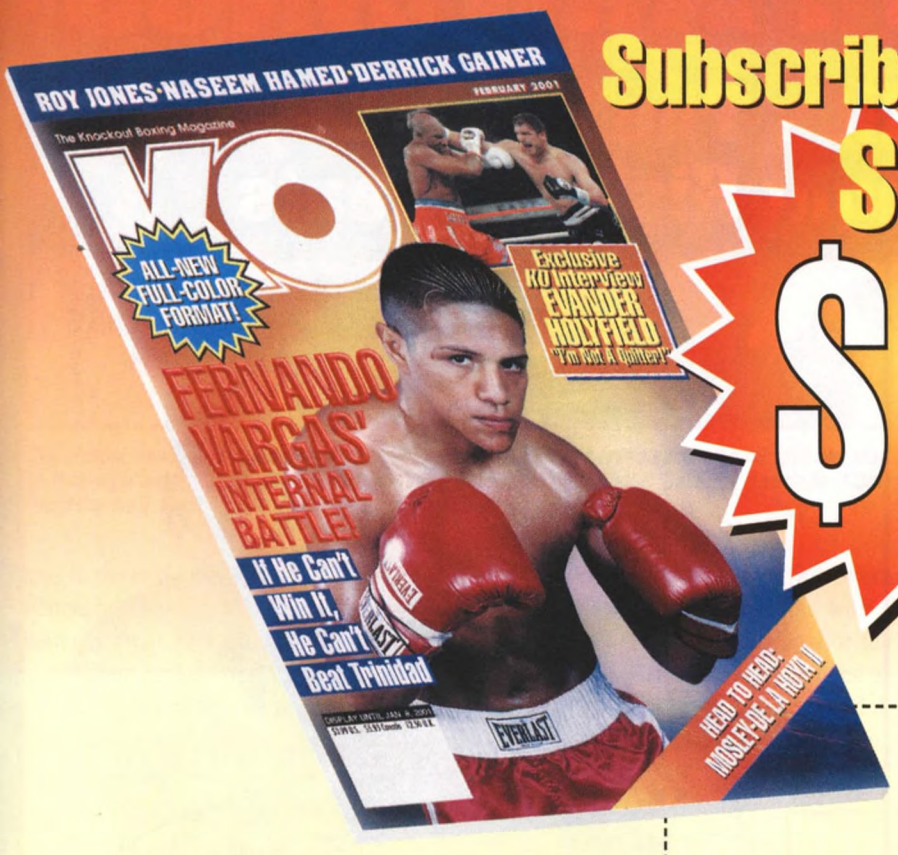

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1950s Lightweight Luther Rawlings

Teaching Kids The Same Lessons He Taught His Opponents

By Pete Ehrmann

Luther Rawlings' classroom is bordered by ropes, and instead of maps or pictures of Chaucer on the walls, there are covers from old issues of THE RING. But members of the Leo High School boxing team in Chicago learn more than how to jab, hook, and plant their feet from the 1950s lightweight star.

"Each and every one of these kids says, 'I'm gonna win a title,'" said the 73-year-old Rawlings. "I tell 'em, 'I'm glad, but it's not as easy as you think. It's a grueling sport. Get an education. Stay in school and graduate. Get some kind of paper, and they'll recognize you and give you a better chance.'"

Once recognized as the number-one ranked contender for the 135-pound championship, Rawlings never got his chance at the title. It wasn't for a lack of a diploma, though, but rather because instead of demanding the championship match Rawlings deserved, his manager settled for a non-title match with then-champion Jimmy Carter. What happened in that fight convinced Carter to never get that close to Rawlings wearing boxing gloves again.

A deacon in his church and the father of a minister, Rawlings has no bitterness about that, nor any of the other bad breaks that occurred in his seven-year boxing career that saw him end up on the short end of a seemingly inordinate number of split decisions.

A stylish boxer who fought 65 times as a professional (seven of them against world champions or future titlists), Rawlings recalls as the worst beating he ever took being the one he got from his mother. That

The closest Rawlings came to winning a world title was when he lost a controversial split decision to then-lightweight champion Jimmy Carter in a 1952 non-title bout. Because Rawlings (right) fought so well, Carter never gave him a crack at the title.

was in the mid-'40s when he showed up in Chicago, where she had gone to visit her sister. Rawlings was "just a 16-year-old pup" when he hitchhiked from the family home in Memphis. His name was Lucius Minor Jr. then, and he hitchhiked the whole way by himself, after first trying to work his way north laying railroad track.

A black teenager, weighing all of 118 pounds, thumbing his way to Chicago?

"I was a young kid," Rawlings said offhandedly, as if talking about a walk across a busy street. "And in those days, we didn't have to worry about all the knives and guns that are around everywhere today."

While the whipping she administered was memorable, Mrs. Minor did not go so far as to kick her son's skinny ass all the way back to Memphis. Even more surprising, when it was time for her to return home, her son stayed behind with her permission. He had a hometown pal, Ed Rollins, who was a rugged amateur boxer, fighting at the Savoy Ballroom and other places around town where amateur cards were held several nights a week. Lucius was with him one night when Rollins' scheduled opponent balked at entering the ring with him. "But we'll fight his brother," said the other guy's handler, indicating Minor, who was standing next to his friend.

Thus a new name and career were launched together, as Rawlings won a three-round decision that night. For the next couple of years, he fought as often as five times a week, living off the few dollars he was paid for boxing, and sleeping in all-night theaters.

His professional career, like the amateur one, just happened.

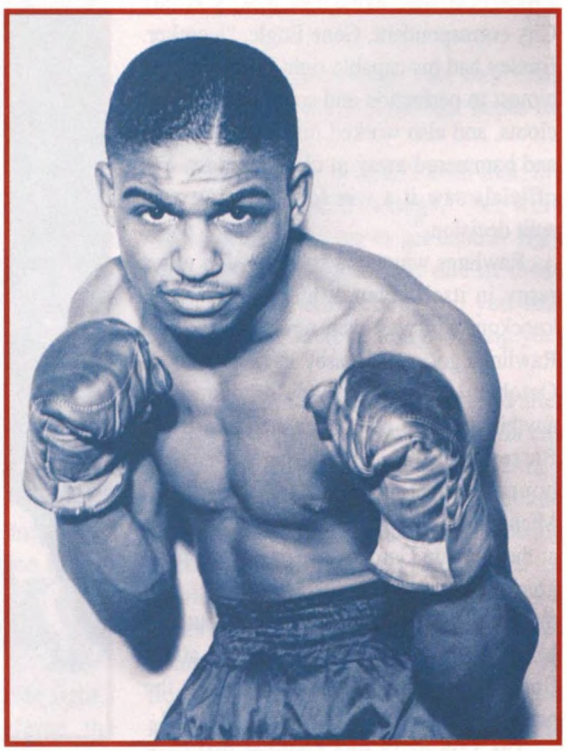
"It was not preplanned," Rawlings said. "It just seemed a pretty good way to make money."

After officially turning pro by beating Augie Yerret on June 27, 1947, Rawlings went on to finish the year 7-1-1. He was managed then by Howard Frazier, who also handled Johnny "Honeyboy" Bratton, who would win and lose the NBA version of the welterweight title in 1951. Rawlings and Bratton, the latter already a headliner in Chicago when Rawlings was starting out, became fast friends, and Rawlings patterned himself after his flashy stablemate. It's probably just a coincidence that they even got their jaws broken around the same time in 1948. Bratton had his busted by former lightweight champion Beau Jack, and, just 17 days later, Rawlings suffered the same fate when Al Jordan stopped him in the first round after a right hand unhinged the Chicago boxer's mandible on both sides.

Despite the setback, the 6' Rawlings was a headliner himself by the end of the year, using his long arms and legs, along with superior conditioning, to good advantage over shorter lightweights.

"I never was noted as a kayo artist," said Rawlings. "I never even tried to knock somebody out. But I was proud of my jab and was a pretty good boxer. Any fights I won, I outboxed guys or outlasted them. Sooner or later, the other guy would get tired before me. I had stamina not found in other fighters. I could go and go and go."

A month after losing a tight decision to future lightweight champion Joe Brown (they would box to a draw four years later), Rawlings went to Detroit as a last-minute substitute against THE RING's seventh-ranked contender, on a card promoted by former heavyweight champion Joe Louis at Olympia Stadium. The 10,062 fans there saw a major upset, as knockout specialist Art Aragon, the California "Golden Boy," dropped a 10-round decision to Rawlings.



Tragedy struck when Talmadge Bussey (pictured) died of a brain injury after being knocked out by Rawlings in 1949. Ironically, Rawlings was never considered a dangerous puncher.

One of Rawlings' first big wins came over Art Aragon, the original "Golden Boy." Rawlings won a 10-round decision over the California knockout artist in a major upset.

After two more wins, Rawlings met a tough Detroit boxer named Talmadge Bussey at Marigold Gardens Arena in Chicago. It was, wrote THE RING's Windy City correspondent, Gene Engle, "a corker. Bussey had his capable right hand working almost to perfection and scored the heavier clouts, and also worked inside of Rawlings and hammered away in close quarters. Yet officials saw it a win for Rawlings on a split decision."

Rawlings winning a split decision was a rarity in itself, even at his home base. A knockout win was even rarer, and the one Rawlings got over Bussey in a rematch on October 10, 1949, he would have given anything to take back after the 26-year-old Bussey died of a cerebral hemorrhage 13 hours later. Jack Waina, THE RING's Michigan correspondent, described the fight at the Arcadia Gardens as "one of the most grueling bouts seen in the Motor City ... In the eighth, Rawlings laid Bussey out just before the bell. Instead of halting the affair, Bussey was allowed to come out for the ninth, which proved to be the fatal round."

The 14th of 18 ring fatalities that year, Bussey's death caused a flurry of charges in Michigan boxing, chief among them a new rule ordering the one-minute interval between rounds expanded to 1½ minutes. It changed Rawlings, too.

"It takes something out of you," he said. "When you are the direct cause of somebody getting hurt, it stings you tremendously." Even today, Rawlings has a hard time understanding how it happened. "I just couldn't punch," he said. "Every now and then, I'd hit 'em and they'd fall and be too dizzy to get up before the 10-count."

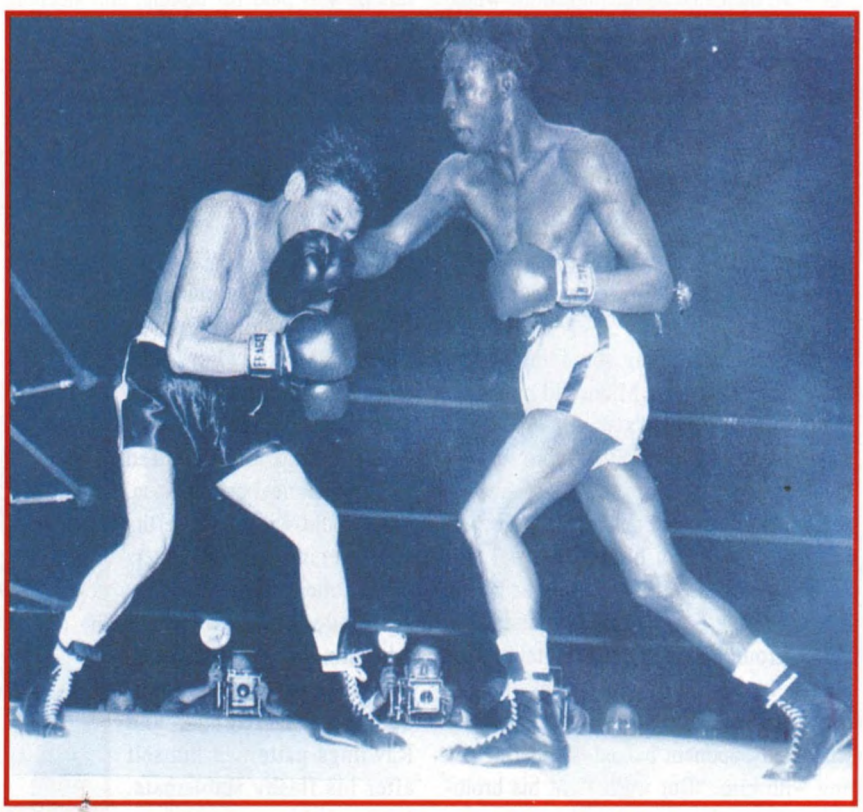
After the Bussey tragedy, Rawlings worked even harder on his boxing skills and conditioning, and when he made his California debut in February '50, against contender Tommy Campbell, the result was such a revelation to THE RING's Harry Winkler, who covered the matches at the Olympic Auditorium, that Winkler hunkered down with his thesaurus to properly communicate his awe.

"To describe a boxer as having the height of a basketball player, a boarding-house reach, and as restless as a guy with ants in his underwear, might sound as though said boxer were something of a clown. And he does resemble an elongated jitterbug, at a distance, but Olympic ringsiders will vouch for Luther Rawlings as being one of the speediest and shiftiest boxers seen in Los Angeles in many moons," Winkler wrote.

Rawlings' "piston-like jab, his slipping of punches and smart infighting," added THE RING correspondent, "brought back memories of some of the boxing wizards of other years."

But after just as impressively beating Mario Trigo at the Olympic the following June, injuries suffered in an automobile accident kept Rawlings inactive for 10 months. Following a single tuneup fight, he began a determined climb up the ratings by convincing everybody but the judges that he deserved the decision in his May '51 match with top-ranked Freddie Dawson. Boos rang throughout Chicago Stadium when the split decision for Dawson was announced.

In his first fight in New York, a month later, Rawlings stopped contender Arthur Persley with bodypunches, and THE RING speculated that the Chicagoan was "headed for a lightweight championship bout." Ranked fourth, Rawlings dropped a split decision to future welterweight champion Virgil Akins in the latter's hometown of



The victory that earned Rawlings the number-one spot in the lightweight rankings came over Enrique Bolanos in 1952. Rawlings dominated the veteran contender, dishing out plenty of punishment and stopping him in the fifth round.

While Rawlings lost a lot of controversial decisions during his career, there was no doubt that future welterweight champion Johnny Saxton (left) deserved the verdict when he took a 10-round decision from the Chicago boxer.

St. Louis in October ("Most of the fans greeted the announcement of the decision with boos," reported the Associated Press), but regrouped by decisioning Akins in a rematch at Madison Square Garden in his final fight of '51.

The fight that boosted Rawlings to the top of the 135-pound rankings was against longtime contender Enrique Bolanos, the California warhorse who'd come up short three times gunning for then-lightweight champion Ike Williams during the preceding decade. Before a national TV audience, Rawlings punched the rugged Bolanos around the ring, and had him hanging over the ropes, taking heavy punishment when the fight was stopped at the 2:11 mark of the fifth round.

The United Press International account of the fight said the win by Rawlings "clinched a title match with Jimmy Carter," and that Rawlings "probably will meet Carter in the [Chicago] Stadium on February 20 or later."

It turned out to be later, on March 12. But it wasn't for the title, and that's something Rawlings still doesn't understand after all these years.

"If you're number one, which I was, you can't go any higher unless you're the champion. My manager made a big mistake. Why fight Carter in a non-title fight? We had no business taking it, because if you give him a rough fight, he'll never give you a title shot, and that's what happened."

At the end of 10 fast rounds, referee Norman McGarity voted for Rawlings, 52-48 (via the five-point must system), but the two judges went for the champion by two points. Carter fought in close most of the way in an effort to nullify Rawlings' long reach.

"Everybody thought I won the fight," Rawlings said. "When the referee, the closest thing to the fighters, gives you the decision, that tells you who really won the fight."

But the decision wasn't the only thing that got away. So did Rawlings' hopes for a title fight.

"Jimmy Carter wouldn't even look my way again," said Rawlings. "We were whistling Dixie trying to get another fight with him. When you fight one of those guys with top connections and you beat him, you were more or less hastening your own doom."

But what really doomed Rawlings after the Carter fight was going 6-13-3 for the rest of his career. Welterweight Johnny Saxton, who'd later win the 147-pound belt, won his 29th fight in a row by taking a convincing decision from him in Rawlings' next fight, and then New York's Parkway Arena lived up to its reputation as a house of upsets when rising Joe Miceli floored Rawlings twice in the first round and then stopped him in the second. And Rawlings found out why lightweight contender Orlando Zulueta was known as "the fighter with knives in his gloves" when

Zulueta sliced open his left eyebrow badly enough for the doctor to keep the local boxer in his corner after the fourth round of their televised match at Chicago Stadium.

The old split-decision bugaboo continued to afflict Rawlings. Against Jimmy "Bud" Taylor in New Orleans, Rawlings was setting a furious pace when some customers with brains as slack as their jaws decided the ring was as good a place as any to discard their empties. Coincidentally, Taylor was looking pretty worn out when the bottles started to fly in the fifth round. The interval between that and the sixth round was 10 minutes long, so that the broken glass could be cleared away, and the house lights were kept on high for the remainder of the fight to detect any more incoming missiles. The added wattage apparently affected the judges' vision. They went for Taylor, 2-1.

"There's always something with boxing," Rawlings said with a chuckle. "When you're fighting those guys and they got all the connections, if you don't knock 'em out, you're not gonna get it. And I never had the punch. I always had a good left jab, but the trouble is you got to follow it with a hard right, and I just didn't have that. I never got discouraged though. I just fought and fought."

In 1953, Rawlings fought consecutive draws with Brown and Wallace "Bud" Smith, who'd later win the lightweight crown and lose it to Brown. The next year, Rawlings' only losses were both by split decisions, to Italians Livio Minelli and Italo Scortichini. A rematch with Miceli in '55 would have been a draw but for the round taken away from Rawlings for a low punch. The St. Louis crowd heartily booed the decision for Miceli.

Rawlings finally got a championship fight that year, but the title he won by decision over Johnny Brown in Chicago only made him the top welterweight in the State of Illinois. He finally retired in '56, with a 37-22-6 (14) log, and opened a tavern "because I was trying to pattern myself after Sugar Ray Robinson," who had opened his own night spot in Harlem.

Rawlings was retired until two years ago, when he went with his friend, Herman Mills, another fine Chicago lightweight in the '50s, to Leo High School. It's a private school where a boxing program was started by attorney Mike Joyce, a Leo alumnus and former boxer. Joined by Eddie Perkins, the former world junior welterweight champion, the trio puts ringsters through their paces from two to six o'clock every afternoon in a gym set up in a former classroom.

PHOTO BY PETE EHRMANN

Today, the 72-year-old Rawlings passes on his boxing knowledge to students such as Chris Shaw (pictured) at Leo High School in Chicago. According to Rawlings, the program "gets kids off the street and keeps them out of gangs and off drugs."

The Leo boxing program has won wide attention and praise, and says Joyce, "Luther Rawlings is one of the reasons. He's a great teacher and a great example."

"It's fun," said Rawlings. "I do a little shadow boxing with 'em. My buddy Perkins, he even boxes with 'em!"

The student boxers know all about today's headliners, of course, and one longtime observer of the Chicago boxing scene says there's little doubt that in his day, Coach Rawlings was the equal of any of them.

"Luther was the caliber of Shane Mosley, Oscar De La Hoya, and Felix Trinidad," said Paul Martin, a former fighter himself who has written extensively about Windy City boxers. "If he was fighting today, he'd be a million-dollar boxer."

At least among his trainees and colleagues at Leo High School, that verdict, unlike the kind Rawlings was used to in his fighting career, is unanimous. ■

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer living in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Kirk Johnson W 12 Larry Donald
Clifford Etienne KO 1 Arthur Weathers
Henry Akinwande KO 1 Maurice Harris
Monte Barrett W 10 Tim Witherspoon
Lou Savarese KO 3 Tom Glesby
Brian Nielsen W 12 Orlin Norris
Charles Shufford KO 5 Rodney McSwane
Vaughn Bean KO 2 Don Normand
Danny Williams KO 1 Kali Meehan
Andre Purlett KO 2 Jimmy Thunder
Sergei Lyakhovich KO 1 Ed White
Nicolay Valuev KO 1 George Linberger
Dick Ryan KO 2 Andy Sample
Corey Sanders KO 4 Willie Williams
Mike Barnardo KO 1 Peter McNeeley
Vincenzo Rossitto W 10 Nate Miller
Friday Ahunanya KO 1 James Lester
Faruq Saleem KO 3 Larry Carlisle
Milan Hinich W 6 Anthony Pearson
Tony Thompson KO 1 Jeremiah Johnson
Andre Kopilov W 6 Maurice Wheeler
Frank Finnegan W 4 Mike Aro
Dominick Guinn KO 1 Marvin Hill
Eric Kirkland KO 2 Curtis Taylor
Malik Scott W 4 Tracy Williams
Paolo Vidoz KO 2 Christopher Hairston
Calvin Brock KO 1 Shawn Woods
Wes Taylor KO 1 Michael Bennett
Michael Bennett KO 1 Donald Macon
Butterbean KO 1 Shane Woollas

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Louis Azille KO 8 Donnell Wiggins
Julian Letterlough KO 2 Ka-Dy King
Imamu Mayfield KO 10 Gary Wilcox
O'Neil Bell W 10 Jason Robinson
Uriah Grant KO 3 Freddy Guzman
Ezra Sellers KO 2 Onebo Maxime
Sione Asipeli KO 8 Jermell Barnes
Alain Simon KO 3 Valery Semishkur
Marcus McGee W 6 Clifford Nellon

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Eric Harding W 10 Demetrius Jenkins
Glen Kelly KO 3 Sakeasi Dakua
George Jones KO 10 Beethavean Scottland
Guillermo Jones KO 1 Victor Maciel
Jaffa Ballogou KO 4 Ron Weaver
Darren Corbett KO 1 Tyler Hughes
Thomas Hansvoll KO 2 Ole Klemetsen
Robert Koon KO 1 Robert Doyle
Danny Santiago KO 1 Antonio Garcia
John Scully W 8 Cleveland Nelson
Troy Weaver KO 2 Vincent Moses
Daniel Judah W 6 Dan Sheehan
Prince Badi Ajamu KO 1 Chuck Berry

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Sven Ottke KO 11 Ali Ennebati
(Retains IBF Title)
David Reid W 10 Maurice Brantley
Omar Sheika KO 7 Lionel Ortiz
Fernando Zuniga KO 3 Scorpion Bawah
Robert Allen KO 7 Robert Muhammad
Andrei Schkalikov W 8 Timofey Maklakov
Anthony Mundine KO 5 Mike Makata
Will McIntyre KO 2 Tony Adams
Yoshinori Nishizawa W 12 Heath Stenton
Jerry Elliott W 10 Elisio Nogueira
Danny Garcia KO 3 Carmine Tufano

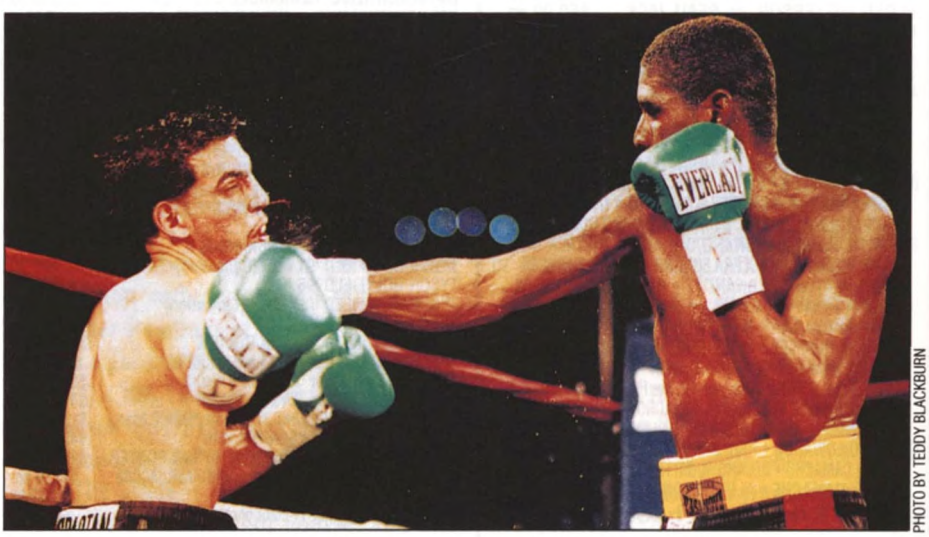

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Featherweight Victor Polo slams David Toledo with a right

Lawrence Chapman W 10 Bobby Jones
Randy Griffin W 6 Sebastian Hill
Jerson Ravelo KO 1 Bert Jackson
Laila Ali W 8 Jacqui Frazier-Lyde

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Hassine Cherifi KO 7 Silvio Rojas
Yory Boy Campas W 10 Chris Sandy
Raymond Joval W 12 Mpush Makambi
Kevin Palmer KO 11 Jinyul Song
Eric Mitchell KO 12 Ross Thompson
Evans Ashira KO 11 Fredrik Alvarez
Andres Galfi KO 4 Marius Polac
Lester Jacobs KO 9 Jason Collins
Akira Ohigashi KO 2 Sakkedao Kietphutorn
Paolo Roberto W 8 Luis Dos Santos
Julio Garcia KO 2 Lloyd Weaver
Darren Obah KO 8 Jason Rarere
Nader Hamden W 6 Bruce Corby
Tokunbo Olajide KO 3 Elvis Alexander
Jermain Taylor W 4 Marvin Smith

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Oscar De La Hoya W 12 Francisco Castillejo
(Wins WBC Title)
Bronco McKart W 10 Brandon Mitchem
Danny Perez KO 6 Edgar Ruiz
Carlos Bojorquez KO 1 Adriano Sanchez
Takaloo KO 1 Anthony Farnell
Kassim Ouma W 10 Tony Marshall
Sam Garr KO 3 Anthony Perry
Angel Hernandez KO 4 Frankie Randall
Dwain Williams Tech. Win 9 Luis Vasquez
Gary Jones W 8 Giorbis Barthelemy
Aaron Mitchell KO 5 Manning Galloway
Azziz Daari KO 8 Olivier Meunier
Kelly Pavlik KO 2 Grady Brewer

WELTERWEIGHTS

Manuel Gomez KO 10 Kofi Jantuah
Vince Phillips KO 7 Marlon Haynes
Larry Marks KO 4 Otilio Villarreal
Jawaid Khaliq W 12 Willy Wise
Carlos Baldomir D 12 Hassan Al
Carlos Quintana W 12 Jesus Valverde
Edwin Cassiani W 8 Gerald Reed
Anders Styve W 6 Philip Holiday
Calvin Green W 8 Mambea Bakari
Luis Collazo KO 1 Kareem Braithwaite
Oscar Diaz No-Contest 3 Pedro Garcia

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Kostya Tszyu W 12 Oktay Urkal
(Retains WBC & WBA Titles)
Zab Judah KO 3 Allan Vester
(Retains IBF Title)
Randall Bailey KO 1 Bobby Elkins
DeMarcus Corley KO 1 Felix Flores
Hector Camacho Jr. Tech. Win 5 James Leija
Vivian Harris KO 3 Golden Johnson
Efren Hinojosa W 10 Ivan Robinson
Ricky Hatton KO 4 Jason Rowland
Dorin Spivey W 10 Billy Irwin
Junior Witter KO 1 Fabrice Faradji
Gianluca Branco W 12 Gabriel Mapouka
Ebo Elder W 10 Emmanuel Clottey
Ricky Quiles D 10 Antonio Ramirez
Bernard Harris W 10 Virgil McClendon
Suleiman M'Bayo KO 10 Manuel Fernandes
Rocky Martinez W 6 Ted Worth
Brian Adams KO 8 Mike Tidline-El
Michael Stewart KO 1 Mike Rios
Del Matchett W 8 Gerald Reed
Anthony Washington W 4 Rudy Lunsford
Oscar Diaz KO 1 Gonzalo Bonilla
Juan Diaz W 6 John Trigg
Ricardo Williams KO 3 John Lopez

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Jose Luis Castillo KO 1 Sungho Yuh
(Retains WBC Title)
Julien Lorcy W 12 Takanori Hatakeyama
(Regains WBA Title)
Angel Manfredy KO 7 Verdell Smith
Artur Grigorian W 12 Aldo Rios
Colin Dunne KO 3 Barrie Kelley
Alejandro Gonzalez W 10
Juan Angel Macias
Miguelito Callist KO 2 Gilberto Serrano
Carlos Gerena KO 6 Isander Lacen
Jorge Paez KO 5 Jerome Johnson
Lemuel Nelson W 6 Thomas Grissom
Michael Clark Tech. Win 4
Leavander Johnson
Rocky Cassiani KO 2 Juan Prado
Ernie Zavala W 8 Rolando Reyes
Miguel Cotto KO 4 Rudy Lunsford
Francisco Bojado KO 2 Glenn Forde

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Michael Gomez KO 3 Laszlo Bognar
Silvano Usini KO 4 Mehdi Labdouni

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Johnny Tapia KO 3 Cesar Soto
Julio Pablo Chacon KO 6 Istvan Kovacs
Victor Polo W 12 David Toledo
Joe Morales KO 11 Carlos Contreras
Fernando Velardez W 10 Nelson Medina
Armando Cordoba W 12 Antonio Cermeno
Antonio Cermeno KO 2 Jorge Soto
Manuel Sepeda W 10 David Donis
Toshikage Kimura KO 1 Tony Wehbee
Panther Yanagida KO 9 Memes Supatra
Cesar Figueroa KO 2 Emigdio Gastelum
Oscar Leon KO 4 Quincy Pratt
Dangkook Lee KO 1 Yuji Gomez

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Manny Pacquiao KO 6 Lehlo Ledwaba
(Wins IBF Title)
Jose Luis Valbuena W 8 Julian Rodriguez
Agapito Sanchez KO 7
Jorge Monsalvo Pabon
Andres Fernandez W 12 Jorge Reyes
Nedal Hussein W 12 Jaime Barcelona
Tetsutora Senrima W 10
Weerachai Chuwatana
Osamu Sato KO 6 Manopchai Singmanasak
Nicky Booth KO 4 Kevin Gerowski
Salim Medjkoune KO 4 Vlado Varhegy
Vincenzo Gigliotti Tech. Win 10
Brahim Abouda
Innocent Mthalane KO 11 Themba Tshicila
Akihiro Kanai KO 3
Chaloemchat Kietprasanchai
Frankie Archuleta W 8 Oswaldo Guerrero
Debind Thapa KO 6 Isidro Tejedor

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Tim Austin KO 6 Steve Dotse
(Retains IBF Title)
Mark Johnson W 10 Sergio Perez
Johnny Bredahl KO 8 Andres Martinez
Pete Frissina Tech. Draw 4 Francisco Tejedor
Luis Bolano KO 1 Andy Agosto
Pone Saengmorokot W 10
Masayuki Fujigake
Alexander Yagupov W 12 Fabien Guillerme
Trinidad Mendoza W 10 Manuel Sarabia
Johannes Maisa KO 3 Wandisile Ntandazo
Jose Navarro W 4 Salvador Rosales
Clarence Vinson KO 2 Luis Claudio

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Felix Machado W 12 Mauricio Pastrana
(Retains IBF Title)
Pedro Alcazar W 12 Adonis Rivas
Medgoen Toyota-Thailand KO 9
Yosuke Kobayashi
Jose Lopez KO 10 Javier Cintron

FLYWEIGHTS

Eric Morel KO 8 Jose DeJesus Lopez
(Retains WBA Title)
Alexander Mahmutov W 12 Jason Booth
Peter Culshaw KO 8 Ian Napa
Hiroshi Nakano KO 10 Woohee Chang
Liborio Romero KO 1 Arturo Velasquez
Ivan Calderon W 6 Raymundo Ramirez

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Songkram Porpaoin KO 6 Tatsuo Hayashida
Vuyisile Bebe W 12 Ayanda Ramncwana
Mzingisi Lindi KO 6 Mbuleko Nyanda
Rafael Lozano W 6 Manuel Sarmiento

EVERLAST SINCE 1910 PRESENTS

The RING

FIGHTER of the MONTH

Those who had kept a close eye on the Asian boxing scene the past few years knew that Manny Pacquiao was not your typical last-minute-substitute pushover. He knocked out the excellent Chatchai Dutchboy Gym for the WBC flyweight title in '98, and though he failed to make weight and lost the championship in just his second defense, he promptly rose to junior feather and blew out world-class fighters such as Reynante Jamili, Arnel Barotillo, and Wethya Sakmuangklang. Not exactly a roll call of legends, perhaps, but solid guys, and if you paid close attention to lighter weights and foreign fighters, you knew Pacquiao was quietly wreaking havoc at 122 pounds.

Still, challenging the highly touted Lehlo Ledwaba for the IBF title in Las Vegas in June, he wasn't expected to win. Those in the know gave him a much better chance than cut-prone Enrique Sanchez, whom Pacquiao was filling in for on two weeks notice, but beating the hot Ledwaba seemed a stretch. That changed the moment the opening bell rang, when the Filipino southpaw jumped all over the South African champ. A bloody nose in the first round, a knockdown in the second, two more in the sixth, and it was all over. If you weren't keeping a close eye on Pacquiao before, you certainly are now.

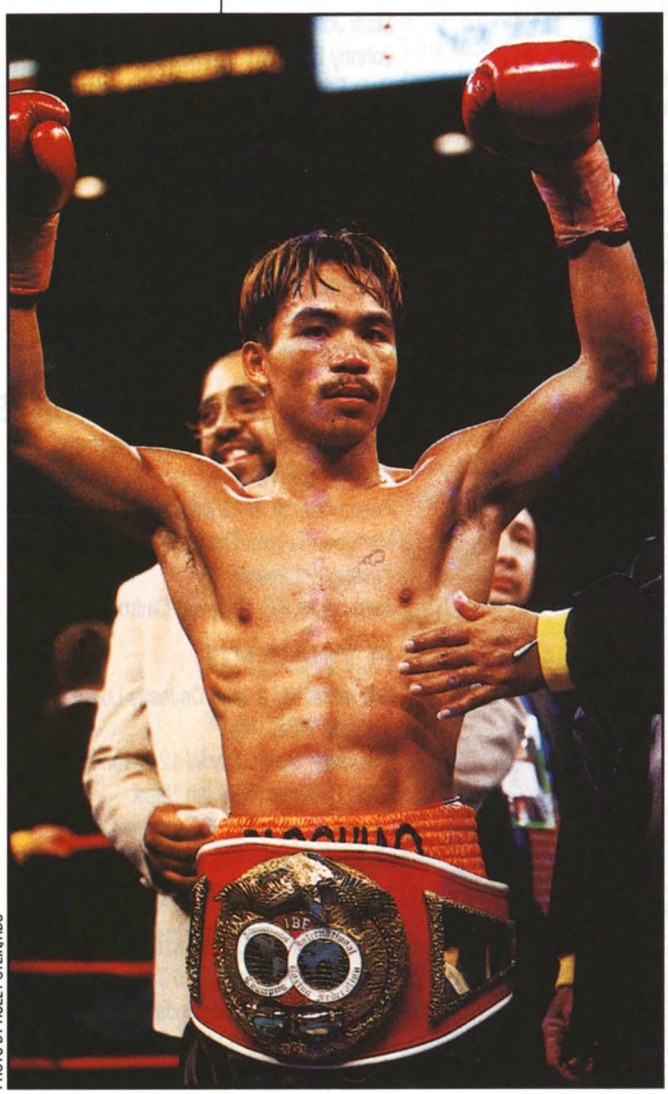

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

Manny Pacquiao

RINGSIDE REPORTS

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

Despite injured hands, Mayweather was in control against Hernandez

Floyd Mayweather W 12
Carlos Hernandez

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Peering through a right eye adorned with a small cut, and with two deeply bruised hands dunked in ice, Mayweather bristled through the pain at the suggestion that skipping a formal training camp and failing to care for his chronically bad hands might have cost him his title if he had faced a more formidable opponent.

"Training camp didn't have nothing to do with my hands hurting," said Mayweather, whose seventh defense of the WBC super featherweight title was the first for which he eschewed a remote training camp, choosing to train in Las Vegas instead.

Hometown fans turned out like the champion expected—9,160 for Mayweather's second title bout in Grand Rapids—but the same couldn't be said of the fight. Mayweather broke down physically as his fans watched. He later acknowledged his hands hadn't healed from his January victory over Diego Corrales and admitted taking pain-killing injections five days before the fight.

He said he never considered pulling out of the fight because of the heavy hometown ticket sales. Mayweather's two title defenses at Van Andel Arena have drawn almost 22,000, but also have resulted in the champion being forced the 12-round distance both times, the first by Carlos Rios.

"My hands have been messed up for the longest time," Mayweather, 24, said. "I wanted to give the fans a war for their money. But I couldn't give my fans a good fight, because my damn hands are killing me. I wanted to get my knockout, but I was hurt. I was hurt bad."

The week went along wonderfully for Mayweather until the day of the fight. He was the center of attention, as he always is in his hometown. Then Saturday rolled around. The day of the champion's first title fight without his father in attendance began with Floyd Mayweather Sr. lambasting his son.

"My son can go to hell, and you've never heard me say that. It doesn't matter though, because he's the son of the devil anyway," the elder Mayweather said from Oscar De La Hoya's Big Bear, California, training camp.

The Mayweathers seemed to have resolved their differences when father attended son's victory over Corrales, and the two fell into a long mid-ring embrace. Not so, apparently.

"I've talked to my son twice since then, but it was all bulls___," said Floyd Sr. "There ain't nothing going on, and there's been nothing going on since that day. He's a conniver, a liar, and a hypocrite."

An even bigger problem that day was the champion's own body. Mayweather, 130, controlled the early action, but by the fourth round, it became apparent he had adopted a more defensive mode. In the sixth, after severely hurting his hand while landing a left hook, Mayweather bent over and touched a glove to the canvas without being hit. It was ruled the first official knockdown of his career, and he winced and shook the hand as he took the eight-count.

Mayweather, 26-0 (19), tried switching southpaw, but then injured his right hand in the eighth or ninth round, he said. By then, the 30-year-old Hernandez, 33-3-1 (21), had decided that the only way to stop Mayweather "was with a bat." Hernandez, 128¼, Bellflower, California, still couldn't score effectively. But in the process of winning by scores of 119-110 (Bobby Watson), 117-110 (Marty Sammon), and 116-112 (Peter Trematerra), Mayweather created more questions than he answered.

"I won, that's the main thing," he said. "I can't say I had a bad night. I had a good night, because I won. If I had lost, I would've lost my belt, and I would've lost eight figures. But those eight figures are still there, and I thank God just for getting me through it."

The referee was Dale Grable (USA).
Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
(5-26-01)
David Mayo

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

Chavez cracks Arias with a right

Jesus Chavez W 12 Juan Arias

Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Chavez-Arias bout left everyone happy. The winner came away with a victory that propelled him into his first world championship fight, against Floyd Mayweather. The loser came away with his second career defeat, but a level of respect and recognition he never enjoyed previously. Viewers came away with one of the most action-filled television fights of the year, in a show-stealing windup to Mayweather's hometown title defense against Carlos Hernandez at Van Andel Arena.

Chavez came away the clear winner, 117-110 on all three scorecards, to successfully defend the NABF super featherweight title. More important, he secured a title shot against Mayweather this fall, as the mandatory WBC challenger. Since Mayweather unseated Genaro Hernandez in 1998, Chavez has waited, unable to force the mandatory challenge as he served his second deportation to Mexico stemming from a 1990 Chicago armed robbery. The WBC allowed Mayweather to satisfy his mandatory defense last year against number-two contender Goyo Vargas.

"When I saw Goyo Vargas come in ahead of me, that's when the frustration really came. I felt like my time was slipping by," said Chavez, who fought nine times in Mexico and once in Poland during his second deportation. Chavez' deportation orders were lifted last year, and he was allowed to return to the U.S. and his adopted hometown of Austin, Texas. Now, he finally gets the title shot that rightfully has been his since 1998.

"I've waited so long for this fight," Chavez said. "There were times I wondered whether I would ever get it."

The 28-year-old Chavez, 35-1 (24), first had to dispatch Arias, 33-2 (27), which proved no easy chore.

Arias, 129, Napa, California, was nowhere to be found in the WBC's top 30, despite his impressive record. He had fought exclusively in California, Nevada, and Washington, but his foray to Michigan elevated his status more than any of his victories.

"After the fight, Jesus told me congratulations on a great fight and he was proud that we made a good showing. That made me feel good. I lost the fight, but I feel like I won because I never thought I was going to get this kind of shot or this kind of big fight on HBO," Arias, 31, said. "I'm very proud of myself and I'm happy with my performance. My corner pushed me so hard and I stayed with the reigning number one for 12 rounds. I never quit."

The two fighters stood toe-to-toe most of the night, with the superior strength and accuracy of Chavez, 129¼, taking control in the middle rounds. Still, both boxers fired punches almost ceaselessly—2,163 in all, sixth most in a bout covered by CompuBox, for an average of 180.25 punches per round, or a fraction more than one per second.

Late in the evening, while Mayweather complained of his ailing hands, Chavez noted, "We both have some healing to do." An ice bag covered a hand swollen to nearly double its normal size.

The referee was Monte Oswald (USA). The judges were Jerry Anderson (USA), Frank Garza (USA), and Gary Merritt (USA).

Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
(5-26-01)
David Mayo

Zab Judah KO 3 Allan Vester

Uncasville, Connecticut: Many were questioning on this stuffy June night whether Judah actually emerged from a locker room at the Mohegan Sun Pavilion—or perhaps from a phone booth. The only thing missing on Judah, as he breezed into the ring amid a vibrant posse, was a cape dangling from his neck and an "S" plastered across his chest.

Displaying a riveting blend of skill and ferocity, the 23-year-old IBF junior welterweight champion certainly lived up to his nickname when his three-round shellacking of Vester turned out to be nothing short of "Super." Judah established himself as the clear-cut favorite in the November 3 showdown with Kostya Tszyu, who was less than stellar in the following bout, a tough 12-round decision over Oktay Urkal.

It might be argued that Tszyu looked vulnerable because he was facing the much tougher opponent, but the case may also be that Judah's sensational performance in his fifth title defense made Vester look much more inept than he actually is. Judah, 27-0 (21) with 1 no-contest, showcased almost superhuman abilities in foiling the Danish challenger, cracking him with stinging combinations that sent him to the canvas three times in as many rounds.

However, Vester, 18-1-1 (3), looked like a skilled boxer in the first round, thudding combinations off the relaxed Judah, 138½, Brooklyn, New York, until the champion awoke with a blistering 10-punch flurry near the close of the round. Sensing that Vester, 23, was unable to break through his chiseled armor, Judah spent the second round stalking the challenger, pawing methodically with a light jab. Meanwhile, Vester began to retreat like a frightened gazelle. At 1:45 of the round, that's exactly what Vester resembled—a four-legged animal. After a straight left down the pipe landed for Judah, the champion decked Vester with a sharp left-right that put him on all fours.

Up at four, Vester, 138½, was punished unmercifully for the remainder of the round, as the slick Judah unleashed a power shower that sent him reeling to the floor again. Vester bounced back up at three this time, only to be pelted with hard shots until the bell intervened.

Utilizing his X-ray vision, Judah found an opening to end things in the third. Calmly moving in, Judah finally rifled home the wrecking ball, a pounding right hook that landed flush on Vester's temple. An ensuing left uppercut dropped Vester for good, as referee Charles Dwyer (USA) called off the massacre with just two seconds left in the round.

Television: Showtime

Promoters: America Presents, Main Events

(6-23-01)

Ted Bodenrader

Kostya Tszyu W 12 Oktay Urkal

Uncasville, Connecticut: If there was a message that the 140-pound champion of the WBA and WBC wanted to relay to his rival Zab Judah on this night, it was this: It will cost ya to mix it up with Kostya.

While it was Urkal, 138, Germany, who ultimately paid the price for such a dangerous endeavor, the engaging 12-round scrap nearly cost Tszyu, 139½, all of his shiny hardware, not to mention his chance to add Judah's belt to his collection on November 3.

As he watched Tszyu, 27-1-1 (22), struggle with the challenger throughout 12 rounds of turbulence, Judah's confidence—just like his ego—was surely swelling. But when it was over, the judges kept the fall unification bout intact, awarding the champion the unanimous nod. Julie Lederman (USA) scored it 115-113, Terry O'Connor (England) had it 116-113, and Richard Flaherty (USA) favored Tszyu 116-112. THE RING saw the fight 115-113 for the champion. It was Tszyu's fourth successful defense of the WBC belt, and his first defense of the WBA version.

While the capacity crowd at Mohegan Sun was anticipating a Tszyu walkover, Urkal, 28-1 (9), dispelled those notions as early as the first round. A popping three-shot combination off Tszyu's head quickly jarred the crowd to a reality that this walkover was actually no walk in the park. Tszyu, 30, staggered Urkal, also 30, with a solid left hook to the temple later in the round, and the fireworks would continue over the ensuing rounds, leaving the crowd in a frenzied state. Although Tszyu seemed to seize control in the second round by landing a series of hard rights, Urkal began to counter effectively with stinging combinations.

While Tszyu seemed on target in the first three rounds, things began to change at the start of round four. The challenger's awkward, shifty style began to spell trouble for the Australia-based Russian, who plodded forward during the middle rounds, searching for the one shot that would end it. Meanwhile, Urkal's quick counters seemed to leave these close rounds up for debate.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Judah's punches crumpled Vester with ease

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Tszyu sneaks a hook around Urkal's guard

Perhaps the most thrilling sequence of the night ignited midway through round eight, when Urkal cracked the champion with a straight right that momentarily stunned him. Appearing angry, Tszyu unleashed a hard combination in retaliation to launch what would be a furious exchange.

While Tszyu's punches seemed the harder of the two and he seemed the fresher man in the later rounds, Urkal landed enough counters throughout the remainder of the bout to raise doubts about the champion's shoddy defense and one-dimensional style, and how he would fare against the formidable Judah.

Television: Showtime
Promoter: America Presents
(6-23-01)
Ted Bodenrader

Sven Ottke KO 11 Ali Ennebati

Nuremburg, Germany: Stoppage victories are not Ottke's forte, but even for him it is preferable to take the short route once in a while. A solid right in the 11th ensured the German of a rare night without relying on the judges' decision as he completed his division-record 10th defense of the IBF super middleweight title against his Algerian-born French challenger.

Ennebati, 30-3-1 (20), is only the fourth opponent Ottke has stopped in his 23-fight unbeaten career. The 34-year-old may not be a fearsome puncher, but he is a force to be reckoned with in the 168-pound division. Ennebati had his moments, particularly in the second, but they were infrequent, and Ottke never looked likely to lose his unblemished record in front of 8,000 partisan fans.

It was a solid right to the jaw in round two that represented Ottke's most uncomfortable moment in the fight. But he soon regained his composure and by the end of the round was exerting sustained pressure on his challenger along the ropes.

While taking things easier in the middle rounds, Ottke, 166, still retained the upper hand, and a firm bodyshot in the ninth took the wind from Ennebati, though, bravely, he remained on his feet. In the 10th, however, Ennebati, 165¼, took more hard blows, and a right to the chin in the 11th began his demise. The 32-year-old Frenchman got up, but quickly went down again courtesy of a glancing left and two more rights, and this time German referee Arno Pokrandt wisely intervened at the 2:25 mark.

Ottke is scheduled to face mandatory challenger James Butler in Magdeburg on September 1. Ennebati returned to his regular job collecting dustbins on the streets of Versailles.

Promoter: Wilfred Sauerland
(6-9-01)
Brian Doogan

Tim Austin KO 6 Steve Dotse

Cincinnati, Ohio: In a masterful performance against an opponent whose primary purpose was to make him look masterful, Austin gave a small but supportive crowd at the Cintas Center at Xavier University everything they hoped for in "The Cincinnati Kid's" long overdue first pro fight in his hometown.

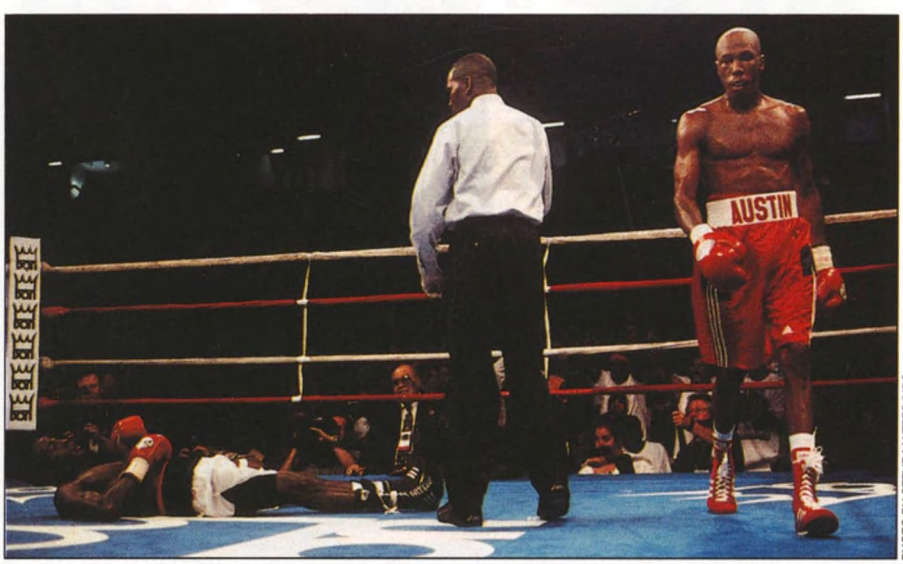

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

Dotse is flattened in the sixth

Displaying an excellent jab, slick defense, pinpoint bodypunching, and finally a beauty of a straight left hand, Austin dominated the limited Dotse en route to a knockout victory at 2:09 of the sixth round. It was his seventh defense of the IBF bantamweight title.

Austin brought to the ring with him a reminder of Cincinnati's boxing past, Hall of Famer Aaron "The Hawk" Pryor, to help out in his corner. Dotse also came to ring accompanied by reminders of the past, but for him they were in the much more recent past and they were reminders he'd just as soon forget. In his previous fight, Dotse's fists killed opponent Bobby Tomasello, and even though a mind unburdened by such thoughts wouldn't have made a difference against the superior Austin, Dotse's low punch output suggested he wasn't quite as up for the fight as a challenger should be.

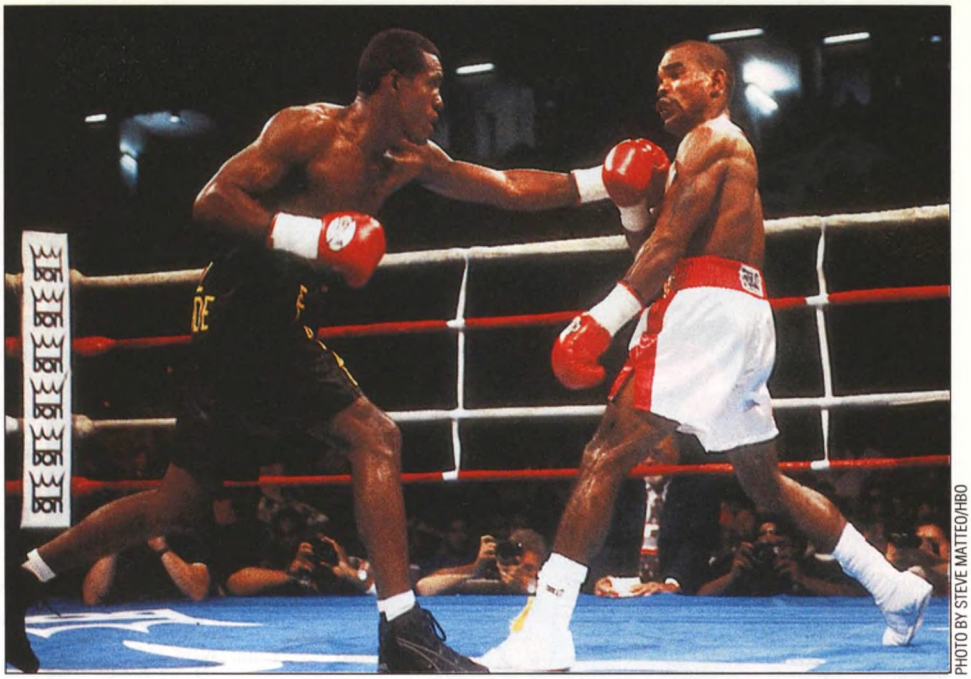

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

The shorter Pastrana struggles to get past Machado's jab

The southpaw Austin, 118, reeled off jabs, bodyshots, and four-punch combinations with ease in the first round, while Dotse, 118, kept his elbows tucked in a tight defensive posture and hardly threw a punch. The Ghanaian challenger (residing now in Atlanta, Georgia) fired off a strong left to the head and left to the body in the second, but the confident Austin came right back with sharp bodypunches and a series of straight lefts that split Dotse's guard. The champion turned it up a notch in the third, hurting Dotse, 31, with a combination to the body before pounding him along the ropes without interruption for a good 25 seconds. According to CompuBox, Austin landed 51 of 76 powershots in the round, a staggering total in a round that was an obvious 10-8 even though there weren't any knockdowns.

The fourth and fifth featured more dominance from the 30-year-old titlist, but in the sixth, Dotse was having his best round, landing a left to the body, a nice left uppercut, and a right cross. It turned out to be the African's worst round, however, when Austin set the table with two grazing jabs, then connected with a straight left to the chin that put Dotse down hard. He struggled up at the count of seven, but immediately fell forward into the arms of referee Kamal Hasan (USA), who promptly waved the fight over.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Don King Productions

(6-16-01)

Felix Machado W 12 Mauricio Pastrana

Cincinnati, Ohio: Don't tell two-division former champ Pastrana that good things come in small packages, because if it wasn't for Machado's three-inch advantage in both height and reach, the Colombian challenger would probably be a three-division champion by now. But as it was, 5'7" Machado made intelligent use of his physical advantages to win a unanimous 12-round decision and tally his second defense of the IBF junior bantamweight title.

Pastrana, 113¾, won the support of the crowd at the Cintas Center with his aggressive approach, but despite a swarming attack, he just couldn't reach the back-pedaling Machado, 115, frequently enough to impress the judges.

The pattern of the fight was established in the opening round when Machado used his limber legs and southpaw jab to keep Pastrana, 28, on the outside. Pastrana, who was so fired up he continually jumped off his stool halfway through the between-rounds rest period, applied relentless pressure and occasionally broke through with a clean punch, but most of his swings hit nothing but air and he never seriously hurt the 28-year-old Machado.

Surprisingly, Machado missed almost as many punches as his sawed-off challenger. According to CompuBox, he landed only 75 of the 435 jabs he threw, with most of them either falling short or going over the top of Pastrana's ducking head.

Pastrana, 26-3 (16), connected with a leaping left in the sixth that made Machado, 21-3-1 (11), hold, and also landed solid rights in the third, eighth, and ninth. But he faded after that, and Machado, who suffered a cut over his right eye in the eighth, swept the final three rounds, piling up points with pitty-pat punches.

The trio of American judges, Michael Ancona, Woody Kelker, and Gary Merritt, gave the bout to Machado by scores of 118-110, 117-111, and 116-112, respectively. THE RING also had the Venezuelan winning, but by a much narrower tally of 115-113.

The referee was James Villers (USA).

Television: HBO

Promoter: Don King Productions

(6-16-01)

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

Bloody Ledwaba takes a left from Pacquiao

Manny Pacquiao KO 6 Lehlo Ledwaba

Las Vegas, Nevada: Filling in on just two weeks notice, Pacquiao was expected to be nothing more than a drum for the South African champion to pound on. But in the end, it was Ledwaba, 33-2-1 (22), who was hammered into submission in relinquishing the IBF junior featherweight title at the MGM Grand on the undercard of Oscar De La Hoya-Francisco Castillejo. Referee Joe Cortez (USA) stopped the one-sided contest at 59 seconds of the sixth, after Ledwaba was knocked down for the third time in the fight.

Pacquiao, 33-2 (24), was in superb condition, and his aggressive style bowled over the methodical, measured rhythm of Ledwaba. The 24-year-old Pacquiao threw almost four times as many powerpunches as the champion (241 to 63) and landed more than three times as many (113 to 35).

"We knew the opponent was a sound puncher, but he was slow with his feet," said Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's trainer. "We just controlled the footwork."

Also working in his man's favor was his southpaw stance. Ledwaba, probably out of habit, kept slipping punches and bending over to his right. Against a right-hander, such a defensive move provides protection from right-hand shots. Against a lefty, Ledwaba exposed himself and ate left-hand powerpunches in bunches. He was a bloody mess as early as the first round.

Unlike most conventional fighters who face lefties, Ledwaba, making his sixth defense, established a hard, chopping jab that landed with frequency in the first minute. Just when it seemed as if this would be a paint job, Pacquiao landed a trio of straight lefts—two to the body and one upstairs—that staggered his man and drew first blood.

"I never expected it to be this tough," said the fallen champion, whose original opponent, Enrique Sanchez, pulled out. "I knew nothing about him. He was a last-minute substitute."

The Filipino challenger backed up Ledwaba, 122, and scored the first knockdown in the second round when the champion fell into a left hook. Despite gushing blood and suffering excruciating pain from what later was said to be a broken nose, Ledwaba returned fire with some hard whips to the body and a series of jabs.

By the fourth, Ledwaba's nose was running like a faucet and the left leg of his white trunks had turned pink. He was still fighting back and seemed to regain some semblance of control until Pacquiao, 122, staggered him with a one-two at the bell. Another straight left jolted Ledwaba to end the fifth. A quick one-two dropped the 29-year-old Ledwaba to start the sixth, and after a pair of jabs got him on the retreat again, another straight left finally finished the job. All three judges, Bill Graham (USA), Jerry Roth (USA) and Deborah Barnes (USA), had it scored 50-44 at the time of the stoppage.

Television: TVKO
Promoters: Univision, M & M Sports
(6-23-01)
Johnnie Whitehead

Eric Morel KO 8 Jose DeJesus Lopez

Baraboo, Wisconsin: WBA flyweight champ Morel needed an impressive performance, and he knew it. Having gone seven straight fights without recording a knockout, it was essential that "Little Hands Of Steel" give his nickname some legitimacy. With that and the fact that he was fighting just an hour from his hometown of Madison as motivation, Morel came through in style at the Ho Chunk Casino & Hotel, left-hooking Lopez into oblivion until the Venezuelan challenger's corner wisely surrendered following the eighth round.

Making his third title defense, Morel, 112, needed a couple of rounds to find his groove. He used his jab well, but mandatory challenger Lopez, 111, scored with more powershots, most notably a pair of right uppercuts late in round two.

The champ took over in the third, however, when a huge left hook sent Lopez down, the bottom rope keeping his rear end from fully touching down. It clearly should have been a knockdown, but referee Richard Barton (USA) was slow to intervene.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Morel puts Lopez on the canvas in round three

Lopez quickly sprung up and Barton simply stood back and let the action continue. Moments later, though, another hook landed for Morel, creating an official knockdown. Morel, 25, became uncharacteristically reckless trying to finish the Venezuelan challenger, missing with wild shots along the ropes, and Lopez was able to survive the round.

That, however, wasn't such a good thing for Lopez, as he proved wide open for every hook Morel threw, tasting two more flush lefts in the fourth and another in the fifth. The fighters landed simultaneous hooks in the sixth, but it was Morel's that was the more telling blow, backing Lopez up. Morel also showed off his defensive wares in that round, making like Pernell Whitaker as he ducked each shot in a three-punch combination from the 28-year-old Lopez.

Morel turned more aggressive in the seventh, and Barton blew another knockdown call when a left-right badly hurt Lopez, 17-2 (14). The ropes were the only thing keeping Lopez up, and he quickly tackled Morel to avoid the official knockdown. Morel looked for new ways to finish the exhausted challenger in the eighth, switching southpaw for a moment and punching from assorted angles along the ropes, landing enough rights and lefts to convince Lopez' corner to keep their man on his stool when the bell sounded to begin the ninth.

Morel, 30-0 (17), is due to make another defense in September, before possibly moving up in weight to challenge IBF junior bantam champ Felix Machado.

Television: ESPN2
Promoter: Top Rank
(6-8-01)

Julian Letterlough KO 2 Ka-Dy King

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Letterlough may get no farther in his career than exciting clubfighter. He makes mistakes clubfighters make: He doesn't move his head all that much; he telegraphs a good number of his bombs; he overcommits to his offense. But he also has something roughly 90 percent of the rest of the world's fighters—club or no—can only wish for: serious, serious punching power. It didn't take long for King, who extended Dariusz Michalczewski into the seventh round last December, to discover what it feels like to go against that kind of power when he squared off with Letterlough in a scheduled 10-rounder at the Zembo Temple.

Letterlough, 177½, stalked a reluctant-looking King fairly patiently in the first round and didn't get much done until late when a headbutt opened up a nasty gash over King's right eye. That got Letterlough's small but fervent hometown crowd going, and "Mr. KO" came out harder in the second. Early in the round, King, 179½, Detroit, Michigan, stood his ground and tried to fend off Letterlough with some slashing left hooks, but the effort already had the look of a last-ditch attempt, and when it didn't work he decided just to grab and hold, presumably until he could think of something better to do. Now any good and earnest slugger knows how to repel a clutcher, and if Letterlough is anything, he is a good and earnest slugger. He walked through King and clubbed away, hurting him every time he landed.

King, 34, already was wilting when about halfway through the second Letterlough, 31, stiffened him with an uppercut, then crashed home a left hook, just like the textbook says. King, 24-5 (16), went down hard and fast, slamming the back of his head on the canvas. He struggled to beat referee Steve Smoger's count, nearly getting to a knee. He toppled over again just as Smoger (USA) reached 10 at 1:34 of the round, then sat on the canvas for a long time after, looking very sore and very relieved. Maybe Letterlough, 17-1-1 (16), will only go as far as clubfighter. Maybe his punch will take him farther.

Television: ESPN2
Promoter: Marchio International Productions
(6-22-01)
William Dettloff ■

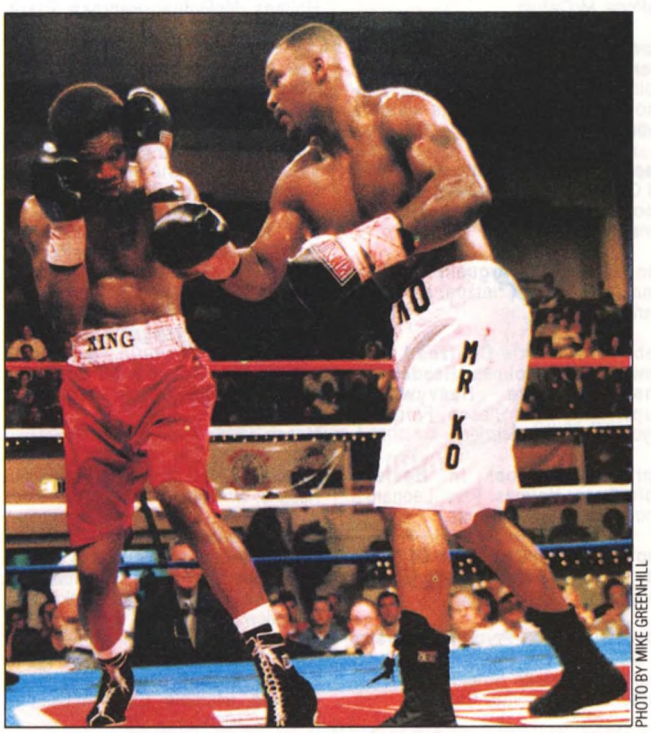

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Exciting Letterlough clubs away at King

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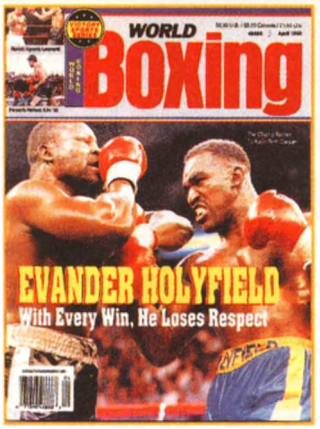

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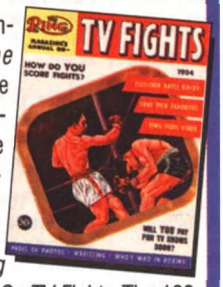

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New Face

(Continued from page 16)

tions from fellow construction workers than he was by reporters after the fight.

They asked him who he was going to fight next and when he was going to start to make big money. Some asked for tickets the next time he fights in Vegas, and some wanted to know when he would buy them a car ("I don't know if they were joking about that one," Griffin said, laughing).

Father, husband, worker, and fighter, Griffin, 25, manages to keep all of his responsibilities aligned. There are times when he would like to be able to just train and box, and not worry about waking up early every morning for work. It's difficult, he admits, but somehow he and his wife, Bridget, manage to coordinate their schedules, so that one parent is always home watching their three children, who range in age from seven to two years old, while the other is working—or working out.

"Randy is a very dedicated, good husband," said Bridget, who works as a cardiovascular technician at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. "Randy leads a very hectic lifestyle, but he manages, and of course, I'm here to support him. Randy loves to box. You know how some men love their cars like their babies—that's the way Randy loves boxing, and I'll continue to support that. I'll have to admit though, I do look back at him every day and wonder how he does it all."

A typical day for Griffin involves waking up at around 4:45 a.m. to run three to four miles. He usually finishes running around 5:45 a.m., heads home, and washes up to go to work from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Then it's off to the gym to work out from 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. It's a routine he follows five days a week, 52 weeks a year. It's a Herculean pace, but Griffin is the first to say that he's not Superman.

There are times when he arrives home too tired to train, but still pushes his dead-tired body to go to the gym. It's those tiny triumphs, Griffin knows, that will make becoming a world champion someday even more rewarding.

Griffin has one undeniable talent that could take him far, and that's punching power. He won his first seven fights by knockout, five of them inside of two rounds.

Against Hill, Griffin got off to a slow start, but quickly built momentum in the second round, connecting with overhand rights and head-snapping jabs. He scored a knockdown in the fifth on his way to a 59-54 victory on all three judges' scorecards.

"The problems Griffin gave me is that he throws a good bodyshot," Hill said. "That's what took me out of my game plan. I think Griffin's an excellent fighter, and the only thing I think he needs to do is keep coming forward and staying aggressive."

PHOTO BY ANGIE CARLINO

Griffin applies his powerful right on Dan Sheehan

That's never been a problem for Griffin, who first began—or rather was pulled into—boxing when he was 15 years old. Griffin's younger brother, Muhammad, got beat up in the gym one day by a 17-year-old with more experience, forcing older brother Randy to step forward to defend his younger sibling's honor.

As it turned out, Randy did not fair much better.

"It was a pride thing that took over," Griffin recalled with a laugh. "I didn't have a chance against that kid. He beat me up bad. I'm from North Philly, a tough area, and word got out that I got my ass kicked. I had to do something about it, so I trained and ran. Two months later, same kid, I decked him."

And in the process he became addicted to the Sweet Science. Griffin boxed throughout high school and earned a tryout for the 2000 United States Olympic team, where he lost to eventual Olympian Jeff Lacy at the Olympic Trials in Tampa, Florida. It was a result that still rankles certain members of Griffin's corner.

"They weren't going to give Randy any breaks," said Howard Mosley, Griffin's trainer since the fighter was 17. "That's the fight in the future. We want Jeff Lacy to go his path, and we want Randy to follow his path, and we're going to meet at the top. Jeff Lacy tells us all of the time that he's training for one fighter, and that's Randy."

Mosley, who also works with light heavyweight contender Eric Harding, is impressed with Griffin's one-punch power and relentless work ethic. It also helps that Griffin has a sound foundation.

"Randy's the best kid I've coached in my life," Mosley said. "I never had a problem with Randy. There are kids you always have to check on all of the time, but Randy is not one of them."

Joe Hand Sr., Griffin's manager, is willing to move Griffin patiently. Hand makes the point that Griffin has a nice job, as does his wife, so there is no need to rush him.

"I'm not anxious to move Randy real quick," Hand said. "We're going to pick our shots, and hopefully he can learn something with each fight. Randy's such a hard-working guy, and he's never been handed anything in life. He's very similar to someone I managed before, Joe Frazier. I think he's the best prospect to come out of Philadelphia since Joe Frazier." ■

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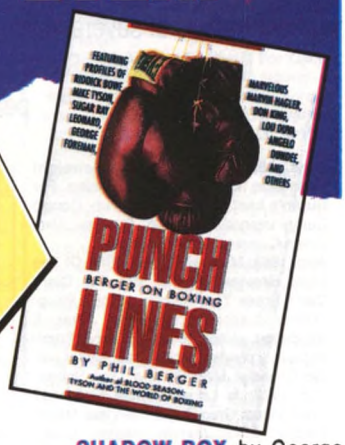

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Holiday 1998: Toe-To-Toe With The Top 10: Where Does Tyson Fit In? Color Pinup: Shane Mosley. Inteview: Larry Hazzard. Plus: Evander Holyfield, junior middleweights.

Jan. 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): Oscar Eliminates Chazez ... Now The Real Fights Begin! Color Pinup: Yory Boy Campas. Interview: William Joppy. Plus: Mark Johnson, U.S.A. vs. the world.

Feb. 1999: Holyfield & Lewis: Did They Hurt Themselves Before They Could Hurt Each Other? Color Pinup: Andrew Golota. Interview: Angel Manfredy. Plus: Mismatches, Bobby Czyz on watching fights.

March 1999: Exposed! Is Hamed Really Hector Camacho In Disguise? Color Pinup: Mike Tyson. Interview: Joe Frazier. Plus: Zab Judah, Vuyani Bungu, Frankie Randall.

May 1999: The Tyson Of Old ... Or Just An Old Tyson? Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Fernando Vargas. Plus: Antonio Diaz, Sumya Anani, standing eight-count.

June 1999: Will Tyson's Jail Time Be A Career Killer? Color Pinup: Johnny Tapia. Interview: Floyd Mayweather. Plus: Roy Jones, 1999 Hall of Fame, stagnation.

July 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: The Fight The Public Demands ... But Is It Going To Happen? Color Pinup: David Tua. Interview: Tommy Brooks. Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Tony Marshall, best of the century.

Aug. 1999: Lewis vs. Holyfield II: Should We Expect Anything Different Next Time? Color Pinup: Fernando Vargas. Interview: David Reid. Plus: Ibeabuchi-Byrd, Melissa Salamone.

Sept. 1999: Mayeather vs. Mosley: Who's The Future Of Boxing? Color Pinup: James Page. Interview: J Russell Peltz. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Thomas Hearns, Angel Manfredy.

Oct. 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Felix Trinidad. Interview: Jake LaMotta. Plus: Tony Ayala, Erik Morales, Junior Jones.

Nov. 1999: De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: "It's Gonna Come Down To Who The Hell Wants It Most!" Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Arturo Gatti. Plus: Roy Jones, Sugar Shane Mosley, Vassily Jirov.

Dec. 1999: David Reid & Fernando Vargas: Olympic Teammates On A Collision Course! Color Pinup: Zab Judah. Interview: Ike Ibeabuchi. Plus: Vitaly Klitschko, Antonio Tarver, Mike Tyson.

Holiday 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): Lewis-Holyfield II: Why We Demand A Knockout! Color Pinup: Sharmba Mitchell. Interview: Paulie Ayala. Plus: James Toney, James Page & Terronn Millett, decade review.

Jan. 2000: Fool's Gold? Trinidad May Have Tarnished Oscar's Image Forever! Color Pinup: Paulie Ayala. Interview: Tony Ayala Jr. Plus: David Reid, Johnny Nelson.

Feb. 2000: Breakout 2000: Who's Going To Lead The Way In Y2K? Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bob Arum. Plus: Shane Mosley, Wise-Chavez, Iran Barkley.

March 2000: Mike Tyson: "I'm Tired Of This Crap!" So Are We, Mike! Color Pinup: Vernon Forrest. Interview: James Page. Plus: Erik Morales & Naseem Hamed, Diego Corrales, women's boxing.

May 2000: Michael Grant vs. Lennox Lewis—25 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Paul Spadafora. Interview: Dan Goossen. Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Johnny Tapia, southpaws.

June 2000: Lewis vs. Grant: Who Will Win ... And Why. Color Pinup: Vitaly Klitschko. Interview: Sharmba Mitchell. Plus: Shane Mosley, David Izon, 2000 Hall of Fame.

July 2000: Today's Fighters, Tomorrow's Hall Of Famers. Color Pinup: Keith Holmes. Interview: Shane Mosley. Plus: Zab Judah, Morales-Barrera, Wayne Braithwaite.

Aug. 2000: Mosley Prepares For Oscar: "It Will Be Like The First Round Of Hagler-Hearns. Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Plus: Vargas-Quartey, Thomas Hearns, Felix Trinidad, common sense vs. cowardice.

Sept. 2000: Now Vargas Is Ready For Trinidad & De La Hoya. Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Plus: Trinidad vs. all-time greats, Thomas Hearns, common sense vs. cowardice.

Oct. 2000 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Floyd Mayweather. Interview: Stevie Johnston. Plus: Clifford Etienne, overhyped heavyweights.

Nov. 2000: Sugar Rush! Mosley Achieves Superstardom At Oscar's Expense. Color Pinup: Lennox Lewis. Interview: Jay Larkin. Plus: David Tua, Oleg Maskaev, Ben Tackie.

Dec. 2000: Mike Tyson vs. Lennox Lewis: 15 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Shane Mosley. Interview: Frank Maloney. Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Bronco McKart, our heroes' heroes.

[FULL-COLOR BEGINNING FEBRUARY 2001]

Feb. 2001: Fernando Vargas' Internal Battle: If He Can't Win It, He Can't Beat Trinidad. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Plus: Derrick Gainer, Roy Jones, Naseem Hamed.

April 2001: Lewis Is Too Much For Tua ... But Could Tyson Do Any Better? Interview: Max Kellerman. Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko.

June 2001: Trinidad-Jones: Superfight Or Mismatch? Interview: Virgil Hill. Plus: Mayweather-Corrales, Paul Ingle, Davey Hilton, Tyson's relationship with Vargas, Judah, and Mayweather.

August 2001: Sugar Shane Mosley: Too Sweet For The Bad Boy Era? Interview: Richard Steele. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Roy Jones, Jesus Chavez.

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WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were compiled as of May 2001, the WBC as of June 2001 and the IBF as of May 2001.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Hasim Rahman (USA)	**C**	**–**	**C**
John Ruiz (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Mike Tyson (USA)	1	7	8
Lennox Lewis (GB)	2	6	5
Vitaly Klitschko (UKR)	3	5	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	4	–	6
Larry Donald (USA)	5	4	4
Lance Whitaker (USA)	6	8	9
David Tua (NZ)	7	10	1
Fres Oquendo (USA)	8	–	10
Henry Akinwande (GB)	9	9	–
Vaughn Bean (USA)	10	12	–
Vacant	–	1	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	2	–
Evander Holyfield (USA)	–	3	11
Chris Byrd (USA)	21	–	2
Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)	–	–	3
Danell Nicholson (USA)	23	–	7

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Virgil Hill (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	1	5	8
Louis Azille (DR)	2	4	–
Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)	3	–	–
Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)	4	12	–
Alexander Gurov (UKR)	5	2	6
Jean Mark Mormeck (FRA)	6	1	–
Arthur Williams (USA)	7	7	3
Dale Brown (CAN)	8	–	–
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	9	6	11
James Toney (USA)	10	3	4
Carl Thompson (GB)	14	8	7
Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)	–	9	–
Andre Purlett (GUY)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	–	5
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	–	9
Ramon Garbey (USA)	17	–	10

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	**C**	**C**	**C**
Clinton Woods (GB)	1	4	7
Yawe Davis (ITA)	2	–	–
Reggie Johnson (USA)	3	6	5
Thomas Ulrich (GER)	4	8	–
Bruno Girard (FRA)	5	2	–
Michael Nunn (USA)	6	–	–
Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)	7	3	1
Julio Gonzalez (USA)	8	5	11
Eric Harding (USA)	9	–	3
Antonio Tarver (USA)	10	9	6
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	1	–
Robert Koon (USA)	19	7	–
David Telesco (USA)	–	10	9
Vacant	–	–	2
Will Taylor (USA)	–	–	4
Graciano Rocchigiani (ITA)	–	–	8
Lincoln Carter (USA)	13	–	10

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Vacant	**C**	**1**	**2**
Byron Mitchell (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Sven Ottke (GER)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Eric Lucas (CAN)	1	–	–
Dingaan Thobela (SA)	2	–	–
Glenn Catley (GB)	3	–	–
Markus Beyer (GER)	4	–	11
Mads Larsen (DEN)	5	5	10
Omar Sheika (USA)	6	7	4
Dana Rosenblatt (USA)	7	2	9
David Starie (GB)	8	6	5
Nordin Ben Salah (HOL)	9	–	–
Thomas Tate (USA)	10	8	3
Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)	17	3	–
Manuel Siacca (PR)	–	4	–
Rudy Markussen (DEN)	15	9	–
Mikkel Kessler (DEN)	19	10	–
James Butler (USA)	13	–	1
Charles Brewer (USA)	25	12	6
Joe Calzaghe (GB)	–	–	7
Danilo Haussler (GER)	11	11	8

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	**C**	**–**	**C**
Felix Trinidad (PR)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Erland Betare (FRA)	1	–	11
David Reid (USA)	2	2	5
Howard Eastman (GB)	3	1	4
Tito Mendoza (PAN)	4	11	3
Kevin Palmer (USA)	5	–	–
Cristian Sanavia (ITA)	6	–	–
Keith Holmes (USA)	7	7	6
Carl Daniels (USA)	8	8	1
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	9	3	10
Morrade Hakkar (FRA)	10	–	–
William Joppy (USA)	–	4	–
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	5	–
Julio Cesar Green (DR)	–	6	–
Ryan Rhodes (GB)	–	9	–
Antonio Perugino (ITA)	16	10	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Ali Ennebati (FRA)	–	–	7
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	12	8
Brian Barbosa (USA)	11	–	9

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Francisco Castillejo (SPA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Vacant	**–**	**C**	**–**
Felix Trinidad (PR)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Roman Karmazin (RUS)	1	6	–
Winky Wright (USA)	2	3	1
J.C. Candelo (COL)	3	8	9
Quirino Garcia (MEX)	4	–	10
Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)	5	–	–
Travis Simms (USA)	6	11	–
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	7	4	–
Jose Flores (MEX)	8	1	5
Yory Boy Campas (MEX)	9	–	–
Bronco McKart (USA)	10	–	4
Fernando Vargas (USA)	–	2	3
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	5	–
Frank Olsen (DEN)	28	7	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	–	9	–
Adrian Stone (GB)	12	10	–
Robert Frazier (USA)	–	–	2
Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)	–	–	6
Ross Thompson (USA)	–	–	7
Alex Bunema (USA)	11	–	8

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Shane Mosley (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Andrew Lewis (GUY)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Vernon Forrest (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	1	–	–
Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)	2	–	–
Hector Camacho Jr. (USA)	3	–	–
Kofi Jantuah (GHA)	4	5	–
Carlos Baldomir (ARG)	5	9	–
Danny Perez (USA)	6	10	9
Thomas Damgaard (DEN)	7	2	6
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	8	–	–
Michele Piccirillo (ITA)	9	6	4
Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)	10	–	10
Ricardo Mayorga (CR)	–	1	–
Michael Trabant (GERE)	–	3	–
Chantel Stanciel (USA)	19	4	–
James Page (USA)	–	7	–
Arturo Gatti (USA)	–	8	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Rafael Pineda (COL)	16	–	3
Cory Spinks (USA)	14	–	5
Oba Carr (USA)	20	–	7
Raul Frank (USA)	–	–	8

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	**C**	**C**	**–**
Zab Judah (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Oktay Urkal (TUR)	1	4	7
Diobelis Hurtado (CUB)	2	2	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	3	–	–
Gianluca Branco (ITA)	4	–	–
Gabriel Mapuoka (FRA)	5	11	9
Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)	6	–	–
Ray Oliveira (USA)	7	–	5

Ricky Quiles (USA)	8	–	–
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	9	5	–
Eamonn Magee (GB)	10	–	–
Hector Camacho Jr (PR)	–	1	3
Randall Bailey (USA)	18	3	6
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	–	6	–
Ricky Hatton (GB)	14	7	10
Alex Trujillo (PR)	–	8	–
Hiroyuki Maeda (JAP)	29	9	–
Demetrio Ceballos (PAN)	–	10	–
Allan Vester (DEN)	23	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Terronn Millett (USA)	–	–	4
Antonio Diaz (USA)	25	12	8

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)	C	–	–
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	–	C	–
Paul Spadafora (USA)	–	–	C
Steve Johnston (USA)	1	–	4
Juan Lazcano (USA)	2	11	8
Lovemore Ndou (SA)	3	–	–
Stefano Zoff (ITA)	4	4	–
Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)	5	–	–
Dennis Holbaek (DEN)	6	–	9
Alex Trujillo (PR)	7	–	–
Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)	8	–	3
Jongkwon Baek (KOR)	9	–	–
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	10	–	–
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	–	1	7
Raul Balbi (ARG)	–	2	–
Rick Yoshimura (JAP)	–	3	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	5	–
Miguel Callist (PAN)	–	6	–
Julio Diaz (USA)	–	7	–
Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)	27	8	11
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	–	9	–
Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)	13	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Angel Manfredy (USA)	–	–	5
Acelino Freitas (BRA)	–	–	6
Efren Hinojosa (USA)	–	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Floyd Mayweather (USA)	C	–	–
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	–	C	–
Steve Forbes (USA)	–	–	C
Jesus Chavez (USA)	1	8	4
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	2	–	–
Kengo Nagashima (JAP)	3	–	–
Tiger Ari (PHIL)	4	–	–
Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)	5	2	8
Randy Suico (PHIL)	6	–	–
Philip Ndou (SA)	7	–	10
Affif Djelti (FRA)	8	–	–
Boris Sinitsin (RUS)	9	–	–
Luis Navarro (USA)	10	6	9
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	1	–
Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)	–	3	–
Jongkwon Baek (KOR)	–	4	–
Lamont Pearson (USA)	13	5	–
Jorge Barrios (ARG)	–	7	–
Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)	27	9	–
Diego Corrales (USA)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
John Brown (USA)	–	–	2
Carlos Hernandez (USA)	–	–	3
Raul Balbi (ARG)	–	–	5
David Santos (USA)	–	–	6
Juan Arias (USA)	–	–	7

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Erik Morales (MEX)	C	–	–
Derrick Gainer (USA)	–	C	–
Frankie Toledo (USA)	–	–	C
Injin Chi (KOR)	1	–	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	2	–	–
Naseem Hamed (GB)	3	1	6
Johnny Tapia (USA)	4	8	–
Manuel Calvo (SPA)	5	–	–
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)	6	–	–
Scott Harrison (GB)	7	–	–
Augie Sanchez (USA)	8	–	3
Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)	9	–	–
Anthony Tshehla (SA)	10	–	–
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	–	2	–
Daniel Seda (PR)	16	3	–
Victor Polo (COL)	–	4	10
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	–	5	–
Philip Ndou (SA)	–	6	–
Lewis Woods (US)	26	7	–
Angel Vasquez (PR)	–	9	5
Pablo Chacon (ARG)	–	10	–
Manuel Medina (MEX)	12	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)	–	–	4
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	–	7
Oscar Larios (MEX)	–	–	8
David Toledo (USA)	–	–	9

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Willie Jorrin (USA)	C	–	–
Clarence Adams (USA)	–	C	–
Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)	–	–	C
Michael Brodie (GB)	1	–	11
Oscar Larios (MEX)	2	–	–
Israel Vazquez (MEX)	3	–	9
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	4	–	–
Osamu Sato (JAP)	5	8	–
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	6	5	8
Marcos Licona (USA)	7	–	–
Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)	8	–	–
Kiattisak Chocchoi (THAI)	9	–	–
Hector Julia Avila (DR)	10	–	7
Yobert Ortega (VEN)	–	1	–
Jose Rojas (VEN)	25	2	–
Sithyodthong Yoddamrong (THAI)	–	3	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	–	4	3
Danny Romero (USA)	–	6	–
Kozo Ishii (JAP)	17	7	–
Nestor Garza (MEX)	–	9	–
Johnny Armour (GB)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
F. Rakkiatgym (INDO)	–	–	4
Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)	–	–	5
Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)	–	–	6
Vladislav Antonov (RUS)	20	–	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	C	–	–
Paul Ayala (USA)	–	C	–
Tim Austin (USA)	–	–	C
Genaro Garcia (USA)	1	10	–
Adan Vargas (MEX)	2	2	4
Jess Maca (PHIL)	3	–	–
Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)	4	–	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	5	4	–
Ricardo Barajas (MEX)	6	–	–
Diego Morales (MEX)	7	–	–
Rafael Marquez (MEX)	8	7	8
Jorge Lacierva (MEX)	9	–	–
Mark Johnson (USA)	10	–	–
Eidy Moya (VEN)	–	1	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	–	3	–
Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)	–	5	–
Sahoiu Sithchai Condo (THAI)	–	6	–
Hugo Dianzo (MEX)	–	8	–
Diego Morales (MEX)	–	9	9
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Pete Frissina (USA)	–	–	3
Johnny Tapia (USA)	–	–	5
Danny Romero (USA)	–	–	6
Juan Cordoba (ARG)	–	–	7
Jesus Perez (COL)	–	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Masanori Tokuyama (JAP)	C	–	–
Setsuo Kobayashi (JAP)	–	C	–
Felix Machado (VEN)	–	–	C
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	1	–	–
Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)	2	11	–
Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)	3	–	–
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	4	–	–
Martin Castillo (MEX)	5	12	9
Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)	6	–	–
In Joo Cho (KOR)	7	–	–
Vernie Torres (USA)	8	–	5
Pedro Alcazar (PAN)	9	–	7
Luis Bolanos (COL)	10	10	10
Alexander Munoz (VEN)	–	1	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	2	6
Mbwana Matumla (TNZ)	–	3	–
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	–	4	4
Sornpichai Pisnurachank (THAI)	–	5	–
Hideki Todaka (JAP)	11	6	–
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	–	7	–
Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)	–	8	–
Samson 3K-Battery (THAI)	–	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Mauricio Pastrana (COL)	–	–	3
Adonis Rivas (NIC)	–	–	8

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)	C	–	–
Eric Morel (USA)	–	C	–
Irene Pacheco (COL)	–	–	C
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	1	–	–
Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)	2	–	–
Mike Trejo (USA)	3	5	5
Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)	4	7	4
Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)	5	–	–
Gerson Guerrero (MEX)	6	–	8
Hayato Asai (JAP)	7	–	–
Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)	8	12	–
Horacio Chicagual (ARG)	9	–	–
Randy Mangubat (PHIL)	10	–	–
Jose Lopez (VEN)	–	1	–
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	2	–
Mzukisi Sikali (SA)	19	3	–
Isidro Garcia (MEX)	–	4	–
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	13	6	3
Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)	–	8	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	9	–
Damaen Kelly (GB)	12	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
David Guerault (FRA)	21	–	6
Hawk Makepula (SA)	17	–	7
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	–	9
Angel Priolo (COL)	–	–	10

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Yosam Choi (KOR)	C	–	–
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	–	C	–
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	–	–	C
Jorge Arce (MEX)	1	5	4
Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)	2	–	–
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	3	2	–
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	4	11	5
Jesus Martinez (MEX)	5	–	–
Takayuki Korogi (JAP)	6	–	–
Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)	7	6	7
Eric Ortiz (MEX)	8	8	–
Agustin Luna (MEX)	9	–	–
Zolani Petelo (SA)	10	–	2
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	1	–
Yura Dimas (MON)	–	3	–
Bebis Mendoza (COL)	–	4	–
Deeden Kengkarun (THAI)	–	7	–
Wolf Tokimitsu (JAP)	–	9	–
Masibulele Makepula (SA)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	–	–	3
Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)	–	–	6
Juan Keb Baas (MEX)	–	–	8
Everardo Morales (MEX)	–	–	9
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	10

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)	C	–	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	C	–
Roberto Leyva (MEX)	–	–	C
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	1	–	–
Jaewon Kim (KOR)	2	–	–
Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)	3	–	–
Yutaka Niida (JAP)	4	12	–
Khulile Makeba (SA)	5	11	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	6	4	10
Erdene Chuluun (MON)	7	–	–
Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)	8	6	7
Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)	9	–	–
Manny Melchor (PHIL)	10	–	–
Noel Arambulet (VEN)	12	1	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	2	–
Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)	–	3	–
Kim Ki Hwan (KOR)	–	5	–
Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)	–	7	8
Fasan Pongsawan (THAI)	–	8	–
Daniel Reyes (COL)	–	9	6
Takayuki Korogi (JAP)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Kermin Guardia (COL)	–	–	3
Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)	–	–	4
Miguel Barrera (MEX)	14	–	5
Surachai Saengmorokot (THAI)	–	–	9

CLASSIC

From THE RING, February 1983

TWO VIEWS OF THE MOUTH THAT ROARED

Pro: Cosell, Profit or Prophet?

By Dave Kindred

Monday night someone telephoned Howard Cosell in the ABC-TV truck outside Tampa Stadium. Did Cosell want to do the blow-by-blow of two important fights the network would carry soon? This is in his contract. He gets first call because, across four decades, Cosell's masterly work on televised fights has made him as celebrated as the men he covered: Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier, Floyd Patterson and Ray Leonard.

So his answer Monday night is important at a time when Alexis Arguello is punished terribly, when Deuk Koo Kim is dead, when Larry Homes could have killed the pathetic Tex Cobb with ABC-TV and Cosell at ringside for Friday night's heavyweight championship fight from the Houston Astrodome.

"They asked me if—in the wake of that terrible, terrible scene in Houston—I wanted to do these fights coming up," Cosell said from his New York office the other day. "I told them no."

Not only that, Cosell said, he has made another decision after what he calls boxing's "two weeks of disgust."

He won't work another professional fight.

"I'm not doing any more boxing," he said. "Let me qualify that only a little. I love amateur boxing, and if the company wants me to, I would do Olympic boxing. But professional, no. I have walked away from it. I am past the point where I want to be part of it. I don't want to be party to the hypocrisy, the sleaziness … I'm worn out by it."

The blame for boxing's sickness today falls

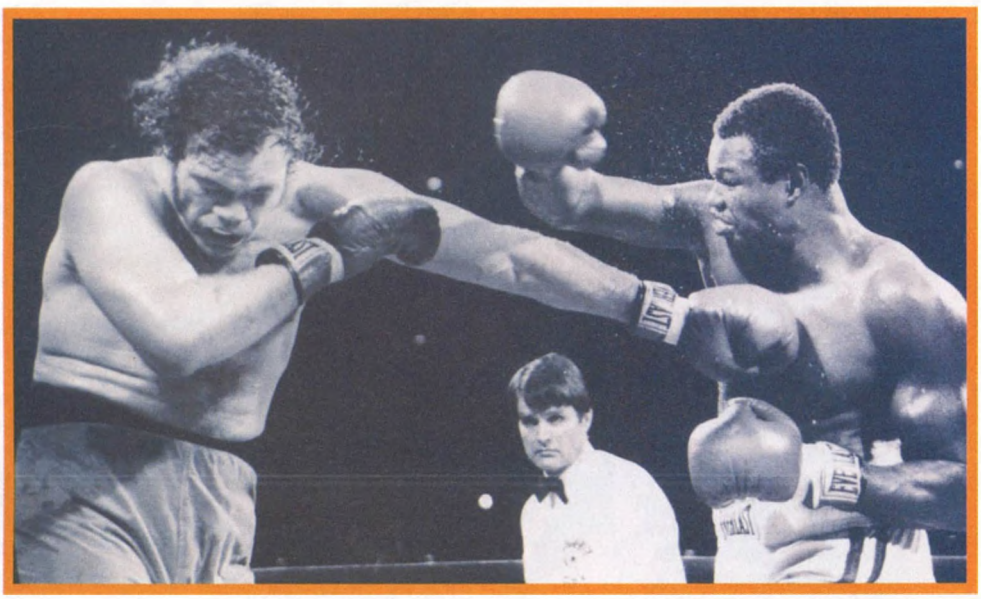
For four decades, Howard Cosell's masterful work on televised fights had made him as celebrated as the men he covered. In 1982, however, Cosell made the decision to no longer cover professional boxing.

on three groups, Cosell said.

"First, the networks who make possible the continued existence of organizations such as the WBA and WBC, which exist only for the purpose of creating championships that in turn create fights that the networks, including ABC-TV, can sell for top dollar.

"Second to blame are the ruthless, sleazy promoters. And third is the vast majority of the print-media members who are apologists for boxing."

Cosell's break with boxing is not unexpected. He hadn't worked a fight since Holmes-Gerry Cooney last summer. His dissatisfaction with, even contempt for, boxing promoters and other parasites is so profound that, in his words, "I went to Larry Holmes' room for a set of gin rummy so I could avoid the sleaze in the hotel lobby."



The unfortunate death of Deuk Koo Kim at the hands of Ray Mancini (above) coupled with the battering Tex Cobb took from Larry Holmes (below) were enough for Cosell to step away from announcing pro fights. Cosell called the brief period boxing's "two weeks of disgust."

There was in Cosell's voice the melancholy of a man who has passed from love to anger to resignation. Once, he railed at authority, asking that fighters be protected from injury and exploitation. In 1972, he testified before the U.S. Senate. He once came to boxing's defense before the New York State legislature.

But on Friday night in Houston—10 years after the U.S. Senate did nothing, 10 years in which boxing has done nothing to help itself—there in the Astrodome, Cosell saw revealed in its ugliness the sport he once loved as art, that moved him to song one night when Ali won. "Forever young," Cosell sang, using Dylan's lyrics.

From the fifth round to the 15th in the Holmes-Cobb fight, Cosell saw it for what it was. This was not sport. This was savagery licensed for profit. At the microphone, Cosell for a half-hour cried out for someone to stop the fight.

"Doesn't he know," Cosell said of the referee, "that he is constructing an advertisement for the abolition of boxing?"

As Ali moved Cosell to song, Friday night's fight moved him to fury. The only touch of saving grace, he said, was Holmes' resolve to keep Cobb alive. However he came by the dubious ability to "take a punch," Cobb stood up under Holmes' heaviest punches. Holmes did Cobb a favor, however, by throwing those punches only often enough to win a round. Had Holmes mounted an animalistic assault, even a granite chin would not have kept Cobb upright.

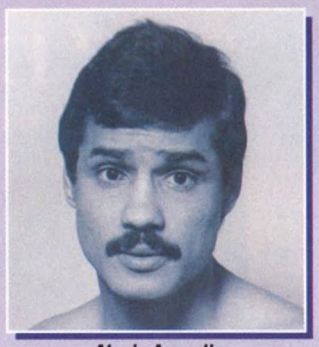
"I admired Holmes because he comported himself with dignity," Cosell said.

Cosell loves fighters, hates fighting. "I have a deep feeling for the men who fight … The other day Ken Norton walked in to my office. My God, he's as thick-tongued now as Ali … Somewhere along the road, Tex Cobb will pay for the punishment he was allowed to take."

From the ninth round on, Cosell made no comment on the fight strategy or tactics. "It was," he said, "as measured a performance as I've ever given."

From Cosell, we heard again and again that the fight should be stopped. He repeatedly named the referee, fixing blame. He spoke of the pall over boxing and said Holmes-Cobb could not have come at a worse time.

THE RING RATINGS, February 1983



Alexis Arguello

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Larry Holmes, Easton, PA
1. **Michael Dokes**, Akron, OH
2. **Mike Weaver**, Los Angeles, CA
3. **Gerrie Coetzee**, South Africa
4. **Renaldo Snipes**, Yonkers, NY
5. **Trevor Berbick**, Canada
6. **Greg Page**, Louisville, KY
7. **Gerry Cooney**, Huntington, NY
8. **Pinklon Thomas**, Philadelphia, PA
9. **Randall (Tex) Cobb**, Philadelphia, PA
10. **Tim Witherspoon**, Philadelphia, PA

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Dwight Braxton, Camden, NJ
1. **Michael Spinks**, St. Louis, MO
2. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad**, Brooklyn, NY
3. **Matthew Saad Muhammad**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Eddie Davis**, Freeport, NY
5. **Johnny Davis**, Hempstead, NY
6. **Carlos DeLeon**, Puerto Rico
7. **Marvin Johnson**, Indianapolis, IN
8. **Oscar Rivadeneyra**, Peru
9. **James Scott**, Rahway, NJ
10. **Jerry Celestine**, New Orleans, LA

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marvin Hagler, Brockton, MA
1. **Frank Fletcher**, Philadelphia, PA
2. **Tony Sibson**, England
3. **Mustafa Hamsho**, Syria
4. **Thomas Hearns**, Detroit, MI
5. **Dwight Davison**, Detroit, MI
6. **Wilford Scypion**, Port Arthur, TX
7. **Fulgencio Obelmejias**, Venezuela
8. **James Shuler**, Philadelphia, PA
9. **James Green**, Irvington, NJ
10. **Bobby Czyz**, Wanaque, NJ

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Thomas Hearns**, Detroit, MI
2. **Wilfred Benitez**, Puerto Rico
3. **Tony Ayala Jr.**, San Antonio, TX
4. **Davey Moore**, New York, NY
5. **Mike McCallum**, New York, NY
6. **Carlos Herrera**, Argentina
7. **Gary Guiden**, Muncie, IN
8. **Clint Jackson**, Nashville, TN
9. **James Green**, Irvington, NJ
10. **Charlie Weir**, South Africa

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Milton McCrory**, Detroit, MI
2. **Donald Curry**, Fort Worth, TX
3. **Roger Stafford**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Marlon Starling**, Hartford, CT
5. **Pipino Cuevas**, Mexico
6. **Kevin Howard**, Philadelphia, PA
7. **Colin Jones**, England
8. **Bobby Joe Young**, Steubenville, OH
9. **Mauricio Bravo**, Venezuela
10. **Elio Diaz**, Venezuela

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Aaron Pryor, Cincinnati, OH
1. **Leroy Haley**, Las Vegas, NV
2. **Saoul Mamby**, New York, NY
3. **Johnny Bumphus**, Clementon, NJ
4. **Steve Hearon**, Houston, TX
5. **Sang-Hyun Kim**, Korea
6. **Guillermo Fernandez**, Venezuela
7. **Ubaldo Sacco**, Argentina
8. **Billy Costello**, Kingston, NY
9. **Bruce Curry**, Ft. Worth, TX
10. **Ronnie Shields**, Port Arthur, TX

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Alexis Arguello, Nicaragua
1. **Aaron Pryor**, Cincinnati, OH
2. **Ray Mancini**, Youngstown, OH
3. **Edwin Rosario**, Puerto Rico
4. **Howard Davis Jr.**, Glen Cove, NY
5. **Andy Ganigan**, Honolulu, HI
6. **Roger Mayweather**, Las Vegas, NV
7. **Greg Coverson**, Kalamazoo, MI
8. **Roberto Elizondo**, Corpus Christi, TX
9. **Livingstone Bramble**, Passaic, NJ
10. **Jose Luis Ramirez**, Mexico

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Samuel Serrano, Puerto Rico
1. **Cornelius Boza-Edwards**, England
2. **Edwin Rosario**, Puerto Rico
3. **Hector Camacho**, New York, NY
4. **Bobby Chacon**, Pacoima, CA
5. **Rafael (Bazooka) Limon**, Mexico
6. **Rolando Navarrete**, Honolulu, HI
7. **Johnny De La Rosa**, Miami, FL
8. **Jorge Alvarado**, Panama
9. **Roger Mayweather**, Las Vegas, NV
10. **Chung Il-Choi**, Korea

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eusebio Pedroza, Panama
1. **Juan LaPorte**, New York, NY
2. **Wilfredo Gomez**, Puerto Rico
3. **Rocky Lockridge**, Paterson, NJ
4. **Ruben Castillo**, Bakersfield, CA
5. **Jose Caba**, Dominican Republic
6. **Azumah Nelson**, Ghana
7. **Mario Miranda**, Colombia
8. **Pat Cowdell**, England
9. **Marcos Villasana**, Mexico
10. **Jackie Beard**, Detroit, MI

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT
World Champ: Wilfredo Gomez, Puerto Rico
1. **Leo Cruz**, Dominican Republic
2. **Jaime Garza**, Los Angeles, CA
3. **Sergio Palma**, Argentina
4. **Mike Ayala**, New York, NY
5. **Lupe Pintor**, Mexico
6. **Felipe Orozco**, Colombia
7. **Ricardo Cardona**, Colombia
8. **Roberto Rubaldino**, Mexico
9. **Juan (Kid) Meza**, Los Angeles, CA
10. **Soon-Hyun Chung**, Korea

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jeff Chandler, Philadelphia, PA
1. **Lupe Pintor**, Mexico
2. **Chul-Ho Kim**, Korea
3. **Albert Davila**, Los Angeles, CA
4. **Oscar Muniz**, Los Angeles, CA
5. **Edgar Roman**, Venezuela
6. **Jiro Watanabe**, Japan
7. **Rafael Orono**, Venezuela
8. **Gaby Canizales**, Laredo, TX
9. **Harold Petty**, Ft. Worth, TX
10. **Freddie Jackson**, Houston, TX

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eleoncio Mercedes, Dominican Republic
1. **Santos Laciar**, Argentina
2. **Freddie Castillo**, Mexico
3. **Prudencio Cardona**, Colombia
4. **Hilario Zapata**, Panama
5. **Katsuo Tokashiki**, Japan
6. **German Torres**, Mexico
7. **Antonio Avelar**, Mexico
8. **Tadashi Tomori**, Japan
9. **Hwan Jin Kim**, Korea
10. **Jung-Koo Chang**, Korea

Good for him.

We didn't need how-tough-Tex-is anecdotes.

We didn't need a shill telling us to stay tuned because, you never know, Tex might win the championship with one punch.

Right now, we need a polemic on boxing. We need someone to shout at the top of his voice that the game is terminally sick.

"If I were the networks," Cosell said, "I would declare a moratorium on boxing until some form of legislation was passed to 1: protect the men who fight with the strictest rules for safety and medical examinations, 2: create an honest system of ratings and records, and, 3: create one federal government group to administer boxing.

"The print media should support such legislation instead of, by saying the federal government has no business in sports, vilifying those who suggest it. There should be licensing of promoters, and there should be an accounting of money on every fight.

"It has to be in all 50 states under the administration of one group. Either that, or abolish the quote—sport—unquote."

Con: Cosell A Shrill Shill With Money In The Bank

By John Schulian

Five years and nine months isn't such a long time. Howard Cosell should still remember, particularly after the way he has suddenly taken to portraying himself as the conscience of boxing. The shame should wash over him whenever he puts his motor mouth in gear and runs over the public's sensibilities. Once he had a chance to be as brave as all his talk, and he couldn't do it. While boxing's vermin panned gold under the imprimatur of ABC-TV, the braggart who was supposed to be truth's greatest advocate lost his guts.

It was February of 1977 and Don King, the ex-convict who became the premier con man among promoters, had the network's great minds wrapped around his fingers like so many new pinky rings. They were shelling out $1.5-million to finance a monument to treachery called the United States Boxing Championships, and Howard Cosell never uttered a word of warning. The people who paid him and the people who counted on him for the truth got played for suckers, and King's knaves and varlets merrily went on stealing fighters from trainers and phonying up records.

The scam was a pushover as long as they had THE RING magazine, boxing's Bible, in one hand and James A. Farley, the urbane son of a former postmaster general, in the other, and Cosell's comforting silence all around them. "This is worse than it ever was under Frankie Carbo and the hoodlums of the '50s," one old fight man said. "The racket guys would do business, but at least they tried to make it look real. These new guys just don't care. They're making wrestling look good." But they didn't get shown for the bums they were until their treachery got splashed across the newspapers that Cosell loves to hate. And even then, he seemed more concerned about the way a pug named Scott LeDoux had knocked his toupee askew.

"How come you're shilling for King?" a writer for the *Village Voice* asked Cosell when their paths crossed at a fight.

"Who are you, young man?" came the sneering reply.

The writer introduced himself.

"Well, I'm no newspaper reporter," Cosell said. "I'm a true journalist. I tell things as they are." On and on he prattled until he arrived at the question that is the essence of his smarmy being: "How much do you make a week?"

Whatever it was, it wasn't enough to

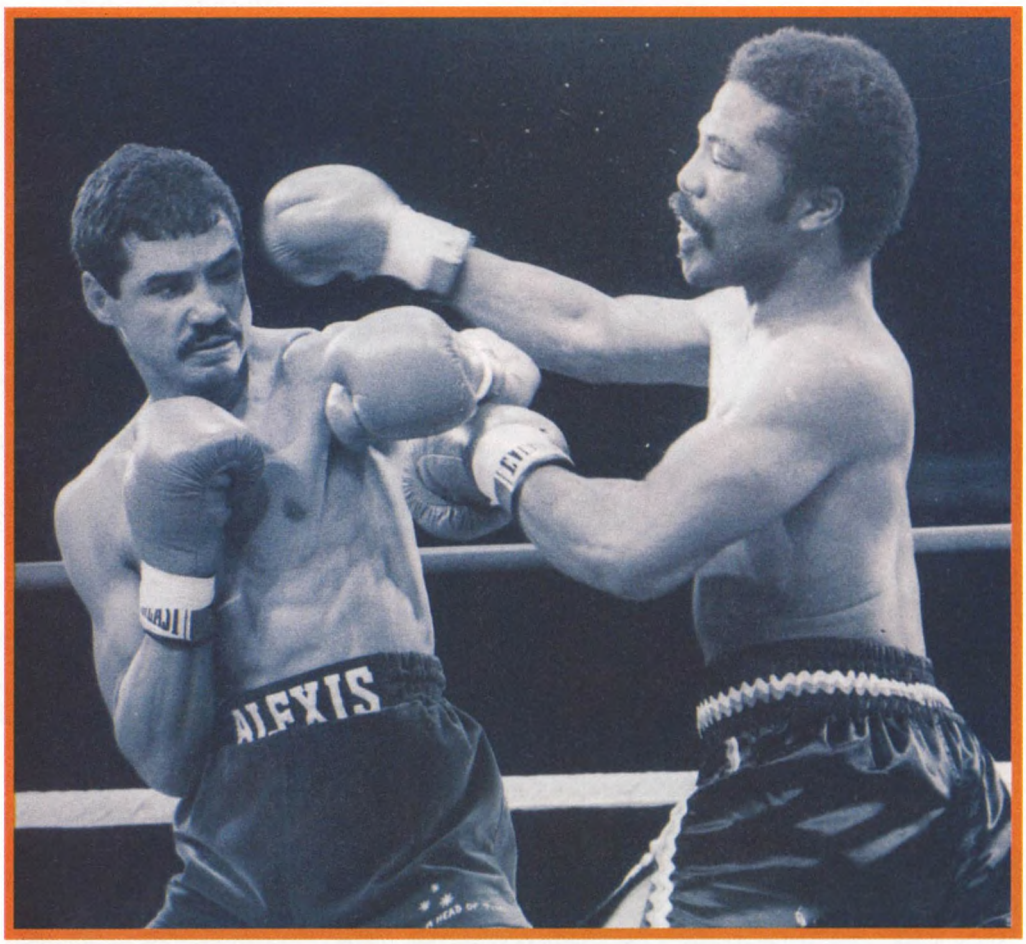
Boxing was one of Cosell's first loves. Cosell railed to authorities about the injustices in boxing. He once testified before the U.S. Senate, asking that fighters be protected from injury and exploitation.

Muhammad Ali and Cosell shared a special bond through the years. During Ali's rematch with Leon Spinks that saw him win his third heavyweight title, Cosell was moved to quote Bob Dylan's "Forever Young."

Cosell thought he was doing the honorable thing when he sat in silence, refusing "commentation" on parts of the Holmes-Cobb heavyweight championship bout. But where was his integrity five years earlier, when Cosell played a key role in Don King's United States Boxing Championships scandal?

buy the writer's integrity. Maybe it wouldn't have bought Cosell's either, but then as now, he played in an electronic league that turns dimwits into shining stars and mediocrities into millionaires. He had his price, and it wasn't until it had been met and the money had been socked away that he could find the courage to decry boxing as ugly and brutal, a heathen spectacle fit only for abolition.

He wore out his audience with moral preachments the other night while heavyweight champion Larry Holmes spent 15 rounds proving it would take an elephant gun to knock Randall Cobb off his feet. "This kind of savagery doesn't deserve commentation," Cosell harrumphed. Commentation? While your ears rang with that one, he maintained his silence for 90 seconds, then resumed his doleful drone. In one round, he excoriated the referee for letting Holmes risk breaking his hands on Cobb's mug. In the next, he gloomed and doomed that what was transpiring in Houston's Astrodome could stuff the Sweet Science in a narrow grave.



Due to the brutal beating Aaron Pryor inflicted on Alexis Arguello in their November '82 classic and the Kim death, Cosell had plenty of ammunition to rip boxing by the time Holmes fought Cobb. But writer John Schulian was disturbed that Cosell found no time to praise the gallant stubbornness of Cobb.

For a knee-jerk handwringer, the performance was just what you would expect after the Deuk Koo Kim tragedy and the brutal beating Aaron Pryor inflicted on Alexis Arguello before that. No time could be found to admit that Holmes and Cobb were putting on a great bad fight. No praise could be given the muleheaded challenger who, in a perverse way, gave a performance as majestic as that of Reggie Jackson hitting three World Series home runs on three swings. Howard Cosell had to play the tearful humanitarian, and his act painted him as a shameless fraud.

He was denying the very sport that built his fortune, that he seized on so shamelessly and milked until it

Cosell's allure as a tell-it-like-it-is journalist changed over the years. The broadcaster could not resist attaching himself to celebrities, whether it was having a laugh with Ali at a weigh-in (above) or schmoozing with Frank Sinatra at ringside (below).

gave forth the blood of tragedy. Then he backed away, a man scared by ghosts, but there are memories that always will trail him no matter how desperately he tries to ignore them.

Before *Monday Night Football*, before those chowderheaded forays into baseball, before he could fall on his face trying to imitate Ed Sullivan, Cosell had boxing. He knew enough to tell the slugger in the red trunks from the dancer in the black and, in the beginning at least, he had nerve, too. "You ain't my friend," the baleful Sonny Liston once told him. "That's true," Cosell replied. Moments later, on camera, he was asking Liston if he threw his first fight with the future Muhammad Ali and if he was owned by gangsters.

Wonderful though it was, it didn't last. Cosell couldn't resist the lure of celebrity, whether he was attaching himself to Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard, confiding that he had lunched with Henry Kissinger, or being seduced by the sound of his own voice. He loved to talk about his brain and the vast store of knowledge within it, but somewhere along the line, his brain went soft and his sense of morality went along quietly.

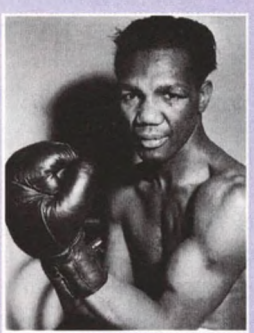
Maybe the finishing touch was five years and nine months ago, when he played dead for Don King and his henchmen. Or maybe he didn't go over the edge until he saw Holmes hammering away at Cobb. Cosell got out the soapbox you thought he had sold for scrap and preached about killing the goose whose violent ways he embraced until he had its golden egg. He went on and on, on and on, on and on, and when he finished, his grimacing audience had arrived at a truth he hadn't meant to reveal: Howard Cosell is a hypocrite. ■

THE RING, February 1983

The Cover: Michael Dokes won the WBA heavyweight title, but his highly controversial first-round TKO victory over Mike Weaver certainly raised speculation that the fight was tainted. When asked if he thought the fight was fixed, Weaver replied, "Yes."

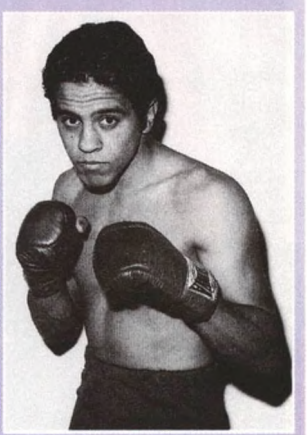
A Ray Of Understanding: The boxing world and Ray Mancini were stunned by the death of Korean Deuk Koo Kim. THE RING implored the public not to blame Mancini for the terrible loss. If "Boom Boom" received any hate mail for the Kim death, it wasn't going to be from anyone who knew his story.

The Toy Bulldog: THE RING recalled the many feats of Mickey Walker, a welterweight and middleweight world champion during the Roaring 20s. Walker earned his nickname, "The Toy Bulldog," based partly on his rough looks, but also because he stepped into the ring with heavyweights 35 pounds heavier.



Chalking One Up For Chalky: Renowned sportswriter Red Smith remembered former featherweight champ Chalky Wright, who grew up hard and had an unusual appreciation for both classical music and a good game of craps.

Fighter Of The Month: With the death of his wife still on his mind, Bobby Chacon went out and put on the fight of his life, winning the WBC junior lightweight title from Rafael "Bazooka" Limon via unanimous decision. Chacon had gone 8½ years between world titles, having won the featherweight crown in '74.



THE A, B, C & DEAS OF BOXING

THE UPPERCUT

By Tommy Deas

You've watched the world's best fighters and read about them in this magazine, and now you want to give boxing a try, or at least learn a little more about the mechanics of the sport. Welcome to THE RING's bi-monthly instructional feature on boxing's basics. Bear in mind, the techniques described here are just one of many approaches to the Sweet Science. The most important thing is to find a good coach and follow his instructions. All instructions on these pages are geared for an orthodox, or right-handed, stance. If you are left-handed, merely turn everything around.

The uppercut is something of a specialty punch, an effective weapon to be used in certain situations that can have a devastating effect on the opponent. It can also be used as a setup punch to land a big hook or right cross.

Knowing when to throw the uppercut, and when not to throw it, is as important as knowing how to throw it. The uppercut is a punch best used at close quarters. When thrown from the outside, it leaves you wide open for a counterpunch that can be more harmful to you than the uppercut is to your opponent.

The uppercut is most effective against a shorter opponent, or one who fights in a crouch with his head lower than yours. Once he steps into close range, he becomes a prime target for the uppercut.

The uppercut can be thrown with either hand, but the left uppercut thrown with the lead hand is much more difficult to master. You should start out working on the right uppercut and only move on to the left uppercut after you have mastered it.

The key component to throwing the right uppercut is the use of the shoulders. Starting with the basic stance, you should change the angle of your shoulders by lowering the right shoulder, raising the left shoulder to the ceiling. If you try to throw the uppercut with your shoulders parallel to the ground, you will end up with much more of an arm punch that has a far less powerful impact.

Keep your hands in their normal punching position as you lower the right shoulder. The uppercut is thrown much more with the body than with the arm. If the opponent is particularly low, you will probably have to bend your knees to lower yourself into position so that the punch travels an arc that ends up exploding upward toward the target.

Once you have lowered the right shoulder, shoulder rotation is the most important element to properly throwing an uppercut. Roll your shoulders into the punch, rolling your right shoulder forward and upward through the target. As you roll the shoulder, you will need to open up the angle of your arm at the elbow so that your wrist as at about a 90 degree angle from the upper arm. As the punch lands, the arm should be roughly in the form of the letter L.

Super middleweight Jesse Marsh demonstrates the proper method for throwing the uppercut. Note that the left shoulder is raised at the same time that the right shoulder is lowered. Shoulder rotation is the key to an effective uppercut.

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Knowing when to throw the uppercut, and when not to throw it, is as important as knowing how to throw it. The uppercut is a punch best used at close quarters. When thrown from the outside, it leaves you wide open for a counterpunch that can be more harmful to you than the uppercut is to your opponent.

The uppercut is most effective against a shorter opponent, or one who fights in a crouch with his head lower than yours. Once he steps into close range, he becomes a prime target for the uppercut.

The uppercut can be thrown with either hand, but the left uppercut thrown with the lead hand is much more difficult to master. You should start out working on the right uppercut and only move on to the left uppercut after you have mastered it.

The key component to throwing the right uppercut is the use of the shoulders. Starting with the basic stance, you should change the angle of your shoulders by lowering the right shoulder, raising the left shoulder to the ceiling. If you try to throw the uppercut with your shoulders parallel to the ground, you will end up with much more of an arm punch that has a far less powerful impact.

Keep your hands in their normal punching position as you lower the right shoulder. The uppercut is thrown much more with the body than with the arm. If the opponent is particularly low, you will probably have to bend your knees to lower yourself into position so that the punch travels an arc that ends up exploding upward toward the target.

Once you have lowered the right shoulder, shoulder rotation is the most important element to properly throwing an uppercut. Roll your shoulders into the punch, rolling your right shoulder forward and upward through the target. As you roll the shoulder, you will need to open up the angle of your arm at the elbow so that your wrist as at about a 90 degree angle from the upper arm. As the punch lands, the arm should be roughly in the form of the letter L.

At the point of impact, you can add a little more leverage to the uppercut by pushing against the canvas with the balls of your feet and adding a little *ummph* with a slight burst upward at the knees.

If the opponent is crouched over, you may want to aim just a little below the head, at a point high on the chest. This gives you a better chance of landing the punch somewhere and gives the opponent less opportunity to get out of the way. If he tries to avoid the uppercut, aiming at a point high on the chest may result in a blow that lands squarely on the chin or face. If he doesn't move, you will still hit him in the chest.

The uppercut can be used as effectively when thrown to the body as to the head. When throwing an uppercut to the body,

PHOTOS BY PORFIRIO SOLORZANO

COME OUT WRITING

We welcome your letters, which may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

TITO'S TERRIFIC

I must admit that I was totally surprised by how Felix Trinidad dismantled William Joppy. Joppy was a good champion who had a decent chin, good hand speed, and power. Unfortunately for Joppy, he ran into a great champion in Felix Trinidad.

"Tito" was awesome against Joppy. He showed that he has incredible punching power, and that Bernard Hopkins doesn't have a chance against this wrecking machine. Trinidad's speed and power will be too much to handle. I was once doubtful about Trinidad being competitive with Roy Jones, but I am now convinced that Jones will be in trouble if he meets Trinidad. I think Trinidad is reaching immortal status like Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Sugar Ray Leonard, Tommy Hearns, and Roberto Duran. Trinidad will surpass them all if he beats Hopkins and upsets Jones.

GENE KELLY
Anaheim, CA

I strongly believe that Felix Trinidad will become one of the all-time greats, up there with Sugar Ray Robinson, Muhammad Ali, and Henry Armstrong. With this wonderful middleweight championship series going on, boxing fans got a chance to see a perfect Trinidad dominate William Joppy, and he will likely do the same with Bernard Hopkins, who I rate as one of the best fighters around.

The big question after that is what will Tito do next? Retire? Fight Roy Jones? Or stay at 160 pounds? I can see Trinidad staying at 160 pounds, because the better fights are there. I also think he should fight Oscar De La Hoya again to shut up all of those De La Hoya fans who thought "The Golden Boy" won the first time they met. If Tito and Oscar got it on at 154 or 160, Trinidad would destroy him. We should enjoy Trinidad now that he's here, because he is essentially the sport of boxing.

CHRIS SMITH
Liverpool, England

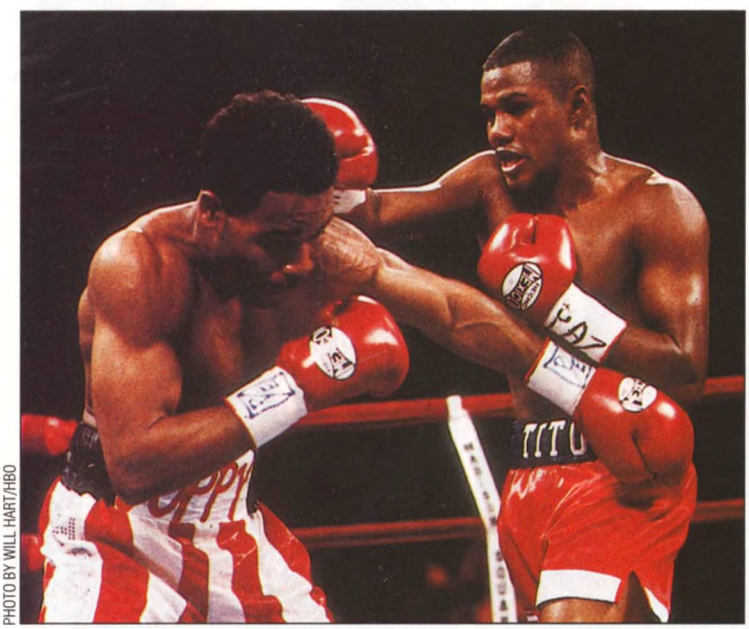


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Felix Trinidad's dismantling of William Joppy convinced reader Gene Kelly that Bernard Hopkins does not have a chance against "Tito." If Trinidad beats Hopkins and Roy Jones, his status could rise above immortals like Roberto Duran, Sugar Ray Leonard, and Marvelous Marvin Hagler.

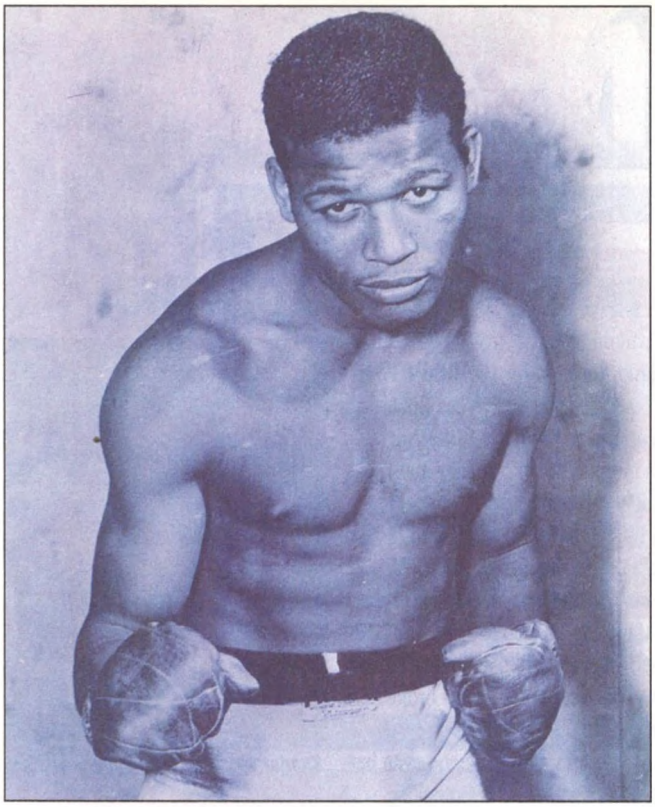
LAZY LENNOX

Lennox Lewis should be ashamed of himself for his conditioning and arrogance while he briefly held the heavyweight title. The most valued prize in sports loses some of its luster when a champion such as Lewis shows up for a fight against a puncher like Hasim Rahman fat, slow, and unmotivated.

TERENCE FOWLER
St. Catharines, Ontario

DON'T FORGET ROBINSON

I was intrigued by William Dettloff's article "The 20 Greatest Lightweights Of All-Time" in the September 2001 issue. I am very impressed with his obvious knowledge—a man who knows what he's talking about. Of



Let's not forget that the legendary Sugar Ray Robinson fought most of his early pro fights as a lightweight, writes reader John P. McCormack in response to the "Greatest Lightweights Of All-Time" section that appeared in the September 2001 issue.

course, if you put 20 experts in separate rooms, they would come up with 20 different ratings. So my intention is not to second-guess Mr. Dettloff, except on the first two positions.

The best lightweight I have ever seen (also the best welterweight) was Ray Robinson. We tend to forget that Robinson was a legitimate lightweight for his first 25 or so pro fights. One of his victims was Sammy Angott, some five months before Angott won the lightweight title. Robinson quickly outgrew the 135-pound class, so I can see why Mr. Dettloff excluded him from consideration.

My second point concerns Henry Armstrong. The only way any lightweight I have ever seen could have beaten Henry was on low blows, as happened when he was penalized five rounds on fouls in the second Lou Ambers.

Thank you Mr. Dettloff for a well-reasoned, well-informed article based on solid expertise.

JOHN P. McCORMACK
Pebble Beach, CA

HELPFUL LOSS?

I am saddened, but not shocked by Naseem Hamed's loss to Marco Antonio Barrera. His performance was that of a rusty, lackluster, ill-prepared boxer who is perhaps bored with the sport. But all the greats had losses, and proved their worth in return bouts. If the loss to Barrera helps to refocus Hamed, I see no reason he can't go on to become an even better boxer. Good luck, Naz.

MICHAEL HILLS
Glenwood Springs, CO

RIGHT AT RINGSIDE

I have one word to describe Nigel Collins' "Ringside" column in the July 2001 issue: excellent. All of the points Mr. Collins made in his column were 100 percent on the money. I live down here in race country (I'm not a fan), and the point you made about cutting down the Daytona 500 to 300 miles because of Dale Earnhardt's death was quite amusing. You're right, there is a double standard in sports, and your analogy was a great example of that.

PAUL J. RAUH
St. Petersburg, FL

GEEZ, RUIZ

I picked up the July 2001 issue and was shocked to see John Ruiz ranked number three at heavyweight in THE RING ratings. David Tua destroyed Ruiz in 19 seconds, yet Tua's ranked number five. (What are the odds of Ruiz winning a rematch with even a fat, out-of-shape version of Tua?) In your "State Of The Game" report, it was stated that "a win over a washed-up Holyfield is still a win over Holyfield." I wouldn't give any more weight to Ruiz' win over Holyfield than Leon Spinks' victory over Muhammad Ali, William Joppy's victory over Roberto Duran, or Kostya Tszyu's victory over Julio Cesar Chavez.

"Father Time" beat those past greats, along with the toll their bodies endured through their countless wars. Face it guys, Ruiz isn't the third-best heavyweight in the world anymore than I am. He belongs at the bottom of the list, not near the top.

SCOTT MIERZWIAK
Toledo, OH

LADIES FIRST

I am appalled at the disrespect your magazine and the boxing media in general shows toward female boxing. There's no RING Female Fighter of the Year, no Fight of the Year for female boxing, nothing. As a matter of fact, the only times we've seen women boxers on a cover has been in non-boxing publications.

Female fighters always give us sizzling, action-packed brawls. You'll never see a female Hector Camacho or Herol Graham. With no disrespect meant to those two great fighters, what you get from female fighters is your money's worth, punch-for-punch.

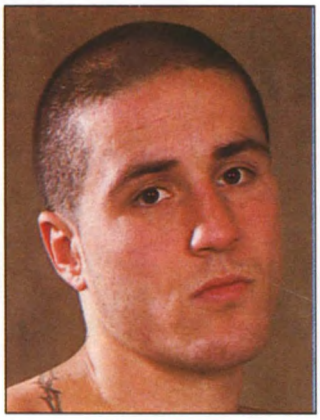
ANTONIO MARTIN
Phoenix, AZ ■

The blood and guts of female boxers like Christy Martin should not go unnoticed, writes reader Antonio Martin. He points out that women are generally less likely to produce a boring fight than men.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

THE PAUL-ITICS OF MATCHING SPADAFORA



Spadafora: "Pretty" payday possible

What's the deal with **Paul Spadafora**? Since winning the IBF lightweight title in August '99, he's faced **Renato Cornett**, **Victoriano Sosa**, **Mike Griffith**, **Rodney Jones**, **Billy Irwin**, **Joel Perez**, and **Chucky T**. To some, that list makes Spadafora the most protected champion since **Floyd Patterson**. But to promoter **Mike Acri**, the fact that Spadafora has been fighting nobodies has more to do with money and logistics than with "The Pittsburgh Kid" ducking the real contenders.

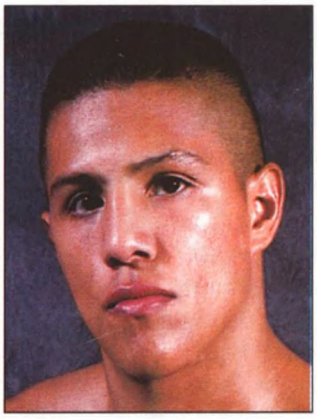
"**Angel Manfredy** came up to me after Paul fought Joel Perez and said he and Paul should get $1-million apiece to fight," Acri said. "I thought he was joking at first. But to get even close to that, you need HBO money, and there are no HBO dates available to us this year. Are we afraid to fight Manfredy or **Stevie Johnston**? No. Those guys are older, they have a lot of scar tissue; I'm not worried about Paul losing to them. But where are the dollars coming from? Am I supposed to go broke? On ESPN2, we just can't afford to fight guys like that."

But on pay-per-view, Acri can afford to put Spadafora in with someone even better than Manfredy or Johnston: **Floyd Mayweather**. Acri says he's been talking with **Bob Arum** about making that fight for January or February of 2002, and that he believes that fight could be worth in excess of $1-million to The Pittsburgh Kid.

"Who is there for Floyd to fight? **Joel Casamayor**? **Acelino Freitas**? Johnston? Top Rank is ready to see if Floyd can be a pay-per-view guy, and I think Spadafora vs. Mayweather sells better than any of those fights."

If Spadafora does fight Mayweather, we'll know for sure that Acri's not afraid to match him tough, though some will still suspect that it's just a case of a huge payday outweighing the chance of defeat. Whatever the motive, the bottom line is that it's a real fight, something Spadafora sorely needs at this point.

FERNANDO'S FRIENDS AND ENEMIES



Vargas: First Shibata, then Oscar?

Fernando Vargas is facing a unique challenge when he meets **Jose "Shibata" Flores** for the vacant WBA 154-pound title on September 22 on HBO: He will be going to war with a good friend. The two have been close since Flores served as a sparring partner for Vargas back in the summer of '99.

"He's a friend, but there's no friends in the ring," Vargas said. "I don't have a problem getting psyched up to fight him. I just hope that if I'm hurting him, I can force a stoppage quickly and nobody gets hurt."

If Vargas is successful against good buddy Flores—and he should be based on the way he dominated **Raul Marquez**, who had handily beaten Flores a few months before—he wants hated rival **Oscar De La Hoya** next. Vargas has held De La Hoya in low regard for years, and that hasn't changed at all despite De La Hoya's recent willingness to make the fight he once swore would never happen.

"I absolutely want to fight him," Vargas said, "but I will not do it 'on his terms,' like he keeps saying. He says he's running boxing; he ain't running s___ but his mouth."

LISTEN UP

The date SET has in mind now for the **Kostya Tszyu-Zab Judah** junior welter unification bout is November 3, though that would likely change if TVKO decides to do **Hasim Rahman-Lennox Lewis** II on that date ... We reported last month that a rematch between **Erik Morales** and **Marco Antonio Barrera** was being lined up for December 1, but now it looks like it won't happen until next May. Instead, the two will first share a December 1 pay-per-view card, with Barrera taking on either **Julio Pablo Chacon** or **Willie Jorrin**, and Morales fighting a rematch with **Guty Espadas**. ■

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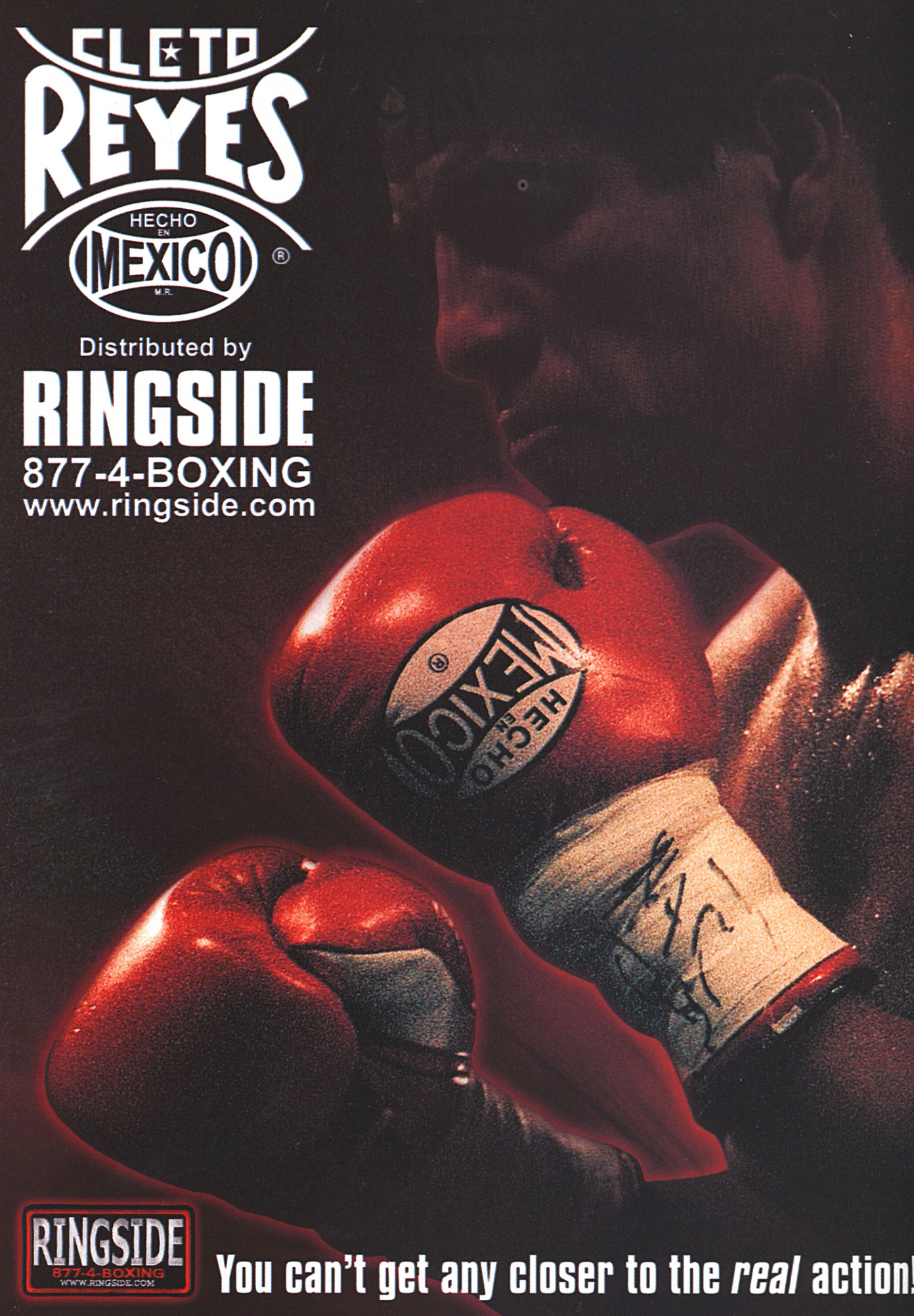
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